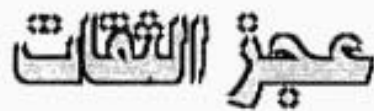


Deficiency

Aspects, Causes and Treatment



Dr. Muhammad Musa Al-Shareef

AL-FALAH FOUNDATION

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Preface

You have been chosen for an honorable mission,

Try to be qualified for such a position.

Man is created for the sole aim of acting as a vicegerent of Allah on earth. Being Allah's vicegerent, man is supposed to construct, cultivate and populate the Earth.

Such an honorable mission and great position is a trust that could not be undertaken by the heavens or the earth. However, man has undertaken this mission and, by Allah's Will, he will be able to fulfill it.

Bear in mind that you - brothers and sisters in Islam - bear the last word of Allah to all mankind and have been entrusted to convey this message. You are supposed to take people out of the darkness of ignorance and disbelief into the light of knowledge and true faith. Such was the mission of all prophets and righteous people.

Being chosen for this mission, you should never busy yourself with trivial things or utter unbecoming words. You should always possess an aspiring spirit that qualifies you for this position that you have been chosen for by your Creator.

The question is: How can we achieve this status and how can we defeat apathy and combat the weakness that overcomes the human soul every now and then?

This book answers such a question in a very clear and meaningful way. We pray to Allah to make this book a means of help to people to achieve such an aspiring spirit and far-reaching soul.

Presenting this book to our reader, Al-Falah extends deep thanks and appreciation to Dr. Muhammad Musa Al-Shareef who entrusted us with translating and producing this valuable work. We are full of hope that Allah will give the benefit of this book to all readers.

This book in hand is a translation of an Arabic book titled [*`Ajl Ath-Thiqat*] by Dr. Muhammad Musa Al-Shareef and published by Dar Al-Andalus Al-Khadra'. Since translation is an arduous task that requires precision and dedication, we have exerted ourselves to produce this precious work, but perfection is only Divine. In addition, due to the delicate nature of the subject as well as the special style of the Arabic language, the translation in hand is not literal; our translators and revisers have done their best to render the text presentable and legible. On various occasions they have amended the Arabic text by way of paraphrasing, rearranging and summarizing.

Al-Falah Foundation would like to thank **Muhammad `Abd al-Fattah** who translated the book. Great appreciation is due to **Selma Cook, Naseema Mall, and Tal`at Faruq**; our editors and revisers, under whose guidance and supervision the subject matter took form.

Finally, we ask Allah to make this work of benefit for Islam and the Muslims and to forgive our errors and omissions. All praise and thanks are due to Allah, without Whose Help and Guidance nothing can be accomplished.

General Director
Sheikh Muhammad `Abdu

Introduction

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, Who guides those who are active and rewards the obedient. He rewards whoever works for His sake, protects whoever resorts to Him, and satisfies whoever trusts in Him. He guides to the means of goodness whoever - of His servants - desires it. He bestows His pleasure on whoever seeks it and grants perseverance to whoever asks for it, until he meets Him. How great He is! Whoever draws near to Him a hand's span, He draws closer by an arm's length. He is pleased with His servant who works for His sake and whoever turns to Him with willingness and hopefulness. He predestined for man the time when his work should be accomplished, so man must obey Him. He appointed the end of man's lifetime; it can neither be delayed nor preceded. It is Allah to Whom people always resort, in Him they trust, and from Him they derive certitude.

May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through whom Allah removed the gloom (of this world), dispelled darkness, facilitated the way for the worlds to find happiness, and supported those who work in His cause. The Prophet's Companions followed in his footsteps and thus propagated the light of Islam among mankind. Then, they were followed by the generation of the *Tabi'un* who worked hard, with sincerity and perseverance. The number of active Muslims who are well-informed compared to the number of those who are apathetic and inactive, has decreased. In the past, the Muslims were crowned as the

best nation for a period of time during which they were a blessing and a spring of safety, light, and peace throughout the world.

After that time of excellence, we, the Muslims started to covet worldly pleasures and compete for them with one another. For centuries we forgot about noble ideals and clung to the earth. We forgot that diligence is obligatory at all times and we became satisfied with trivial matters, to the extent that we became subservient and more and more inferior. Hence, we invoked woe and destruction upon ourselves, except for a few people who knew the time-honored path of glory and, thus, were willing to tread it. They were the same ones who found the door of dignity and, hence, knocked at it. Those few people are now pioneers among mankind. May Allah protect and support them, and help them reach their prospective goals, for the hearts of true Muslims are pained and their minds are troubled because of the recurrence of appalling evil.

This treatise is directed to the faithful believers who have been guided to and are treading the right way, but for many reasons have not adhered to or persevered in this way. Therefore, they have become stuck in their position as if they have forgotten the noble ideals which constitute the foundation of the life of a Muslim.

They are righteous people, young and old, who still keep on the path of virtue and piety, but they are overcome by inactivity, laziness, love of this worldly existence, and hope for a long life. Thus, they want to be righteous without acting or bearing responsibilities. But this attitude is very far from the right way. Have they not been told "*Life is sweet and flourishing and Allah makes you successors (on the earth) so that He may see how you act?*"⁽¹⁾ Do they not want to attain high ranks

1. This is a part of a Prophetic *hadith* reported by Abu Dawud.

in Paradise that only the Prophets and the companions of the righteous, the sincere, and the martyrs can reach?

This treatise is thus a reminder to those who are pious but inactive in this worldly life; who possess all the means to obtain everlasting bliss but for some reason refuse to reach for it and are satisfied with a meager portion of it. It is hoped that they may realize through this work the gravity of their deeds that are characterized by their negligence, and the abundance of good deeds they wasted through their indifference. Surely it is Allah (Alone) Whose help can be sought and in He (Alone) can we trust.

I spent years collecting material on this subject; as I gave many lectures, speeches, and sermons about it. The information surrounding this subject gathered in my mind and I observed its elements embodied in many of the people around me. Through direct observance I found that the concepts that I wrote about were proved correct, as real life observation cannot be compared with mere hearsay.

I do not claim to be free of error in what I write, but I know that my aim is to remind and advise out of the mercy I feel towards my fellow Muslims, and to register the experiences I went through and others that I witnessed. For me, Allah is Sufficient, and He is the best Guardian. There is no might or power except from Him, the Exalted, the Greatest.

CHAPTER ONE

The Deficiency of the Trustworthy

The meaning of "deficiency"

"Deficiency" includes the meanings of weakness and incapacity. In this sense, it is general as it refers to procrastination and it applies to both worldly and religious affairs. It is the opposite of "firmness".

The meaning of "trustworthy"

The word "trustworthy" in this research refers to the person who is trusted by people as regards his religiosity, morality, mentality, and efficiency to manage a certain kind of work. Thus, through being trusted he becomes fully competent. Regarding the field of *Da`wah*, "trustworthiness" means eligibility to undertake a certain kind of work pertaining to *Da`wah* at any of its stages.⁽¹⁾

This definition of the "trustworthy" person is close to the definition given by the scholars of *Hadith* to the term "*Thiqah*" (which literally means trustworthy). However, added to the scholars definition is expertise and competence to manage a certain work of *Da`wah*, as

1. Dr. `Ali `Abd al-Halim Mahmud, *At-Tawthiq Wa At-Tad`if Bayna Al-Muhaddithin Wa Ad-Du`ah*, p. 14.

Da`wah requires experience and if this is lacking the person is rendered ineligible to manage the tasks of *Da`wah*.⁽¹⁾

We may recall the words of the daughter of Prophet Shu`ayb (peace be upon him), as the Almighty says,

﴿ Said one of the (damsels): 'O my (dear) father! Engage him on wages: truly the best of men for thee to employ is the (man) who is strong and trusty. ﴾

(Al-Qasas: 26)

"This means that Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) was the best of men to be employed because he had both strength and trustworthiness which are characteristics that must be considered when selecting someone for employment."⁽²⁾

Strength and trustworthiness are impressive qualifications; once a Muslim is strong and trustworthy, he becomes "trustworthy", Allah willing.

We may also quote the words of Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) as the Ever-Glorious Qur'an says,

﴿ Set me over the store-houses of the land: I am a good keeper, knowledgeable. ﴾

(Yusuf: 55)

Being able to manage affairs and being knowledgeable are two indispensable characteristics for a person to reach the standard and position of being trustworthy. Abu Bakr recommended Zayd ibn Thabit (may Allah be pleased with them both) to fulfill the difficult task of collecting the verses of the Ever-Glorious Qur'an. As a way of

1. *Ibid.*

2. `Abd Ar-Rahman ibn Nasir as-Sa`di, *Taysir Al-Karim Ar-Rahman Fi Tafsir Kalam Al-Mannan*, vol. 6, p. 17.

recommending him and confirming his trustworthiness, he said, "You are a reasonable, unimpeachable young man, and you were one of the Messenger's (peace be upon him) scribes of the revelation. So pursue [the parchments in which is written] the Qur'an and collect it."⁽¹⁾

Ibn Hajar⁽²⁾ (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "Abu Bakr mentioned four of Zayd's qualities that showed why he had chosen him to do that very important job. First, he was young and, thus, more active than an older person to perform the task. Second, he was reasonable and thus had a better understanding of how to do it. Third, he was unimpeachable and thus trustworthy. And fourth, he had been a scribe of the revelation, which made him more experienced in the Ever-Glorious Qur'an. Many other persons may have had such qualities variably, but no one person enjoyed them all."⁽³⁾

As with the case of trustworthiness for the scholars of *Hadith*, trustworthiness today is of different degrees. Some people are more trustworthy and competent than others so that they are entitled to be called the "Pillars of Islam". Some are only trustworthy, some are merely truthful to an acceptable extent, while some others do not reach the degree of recommendation and trustworthiness.

People differ in evaluating a person's degrees of trustworthiness. The correct way to judge may go as follows: Give the title of "the trustworthy" to the one whose good deeds exceed his evil ones; whose righteous contributions are manifest; whose misdeeds are not obvious; and who has never been known to be an advocator of major innovations

1. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*.

2. Ibn Hajar is Ahmad ibn `Ali ibn Muhammad who was an Imam and a *Hafizh*. He left great useful works. His ancestors were from Ashkelon yet he was born, lived, and died in Egypt. He died in 852 A.H. May Allah have mercy on Him. See *Ad-Daw' Al-Lami`*.

3. Ibn Hajar, *Fath Al-Bari*, vol. 19, p. 14.

(*Bid`ahs*) or to be from a sect that is astray. As for those concerning whom people differ over, their condition should be considered justly and impartially. Thus, if one has such qualities and good deeds that qualify him to be trustworthy, he should be regarded as a good man, otherwise he should rectify his ways and return to Almighty Allah in repentance, so that he may become one of the trustworthy.

Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab⁽¹⁾ (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "There is no honorable, learned, or virtuous person who is totally free from shortcomings. Yet, there are some people whose shortcomings should not be mentioned. Whoever has more virtues than vices, then his vices should be forgiven because of his virtues."⁽²⁾

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "Whoever is aware of the *Shari`ah* and the prevailing environment surely knows that a great person who is righteous, instrumental in Islamic activity, and enjoys a high rank in the hearts of Muslims, may make mistakes for which he is excused and is rather rewarded for his effort due to his good intentions. Such mistakes should not stand against him; he should neither be discredited or degraded because of them, nor should his position in the hearts of the Muslims be shaken."⁽³⁾

It may be said that the aforementioned rule is near to the conditions set by the scholars of *Hadith* regarding authentication (*Tawthiq*), and that such a concept is not needed today; and that the ordained conditions should be alleviated. In reply, I say that *Da`wah*

-
1. Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab ibn Hazan ibn Abi Wahb al-Qurashi al-Makhzumi. He was one of the well-established great scholars and jurists. Scholars agree that his reports were of the most trustworthy. Ibn al-Madini said that he never knew among the *Tabi'un* anyone that excelled Ibn al-Musayyab in knowledge. He died after the age of ninety. See *At-Taqrīb*.
 2. Ahmad ibn `Abd ar-Rahman as-Suyan, *Manhaj Ahl As-Sunnah Wa Al-Jama'ah Fi Taqwim Ar-Rijal Wa Mu'allafatihim*. p. 30.
 3. *Ibid*.

today confronts false schools, worn-out creeds, deceptive missionary attacks, and well-plotted Zionist plans. If these are not confronted by trustworthy, reliable people who have been brought up according to the manner of the righteous predecessors, the process of *Da`wah* will break down. Nevertheless, other people, who do not have any or all of these qualifications, can support and adhere to Islam, and help to establish it under the leadership of those who enjoy the qualities of the above-mentioned trustworthy persons.

"It is for leaders and educators that strictness and perfect qualities are required. As for other people, the Islamic movement can benefit by any potentiality they present, no matter how insignificant or feeble it is. The Islamic movement, moreover, can accept whoever sympathizes with it, no matter how many shortcomings he is burdened with, as long as they do not harm the majority of *Da`iyahs*."⁽¹⁾

It should be taken into consideration that weakness is widespread among people today, and that those who are trustworthy are relatively few. This is the case irrespective of time and place, for the weak and the renounced represent the majority among people, whereas the trustworthy are the minority. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *"You would find people like a hundred camels among which you would hardly find (even) one faultless camel."*⁽²⁾

It is incumbent upon those trustworthy persons, who are rare like the faultless camel among the hundred camels, to protect Islam and

1. Muhammad Ahmad ar-Rashid, *Al-'Awa'iq*, p. 141.

2. Reported by Muslim. Al-Azhari said, "This hadith means that people who are completely undesirous of worldly life and care only for the Hereafter are rare, just as faultless camels are rare." An-Nawawi mentioned a better meaning of the hadith, "The person exemplified with the faultless camel is the one with whom people are pleased, who has perfect qualities, strong, and has a pleasant appearance."

maintain its power at the present time. It is they who people trust as being capable of taking charge of difficult missions. If they relax or retreat, who else will rise to assist the religion of Allah, and who will the Muslims resort to - after Allah (Exalted and Glorified be He) - at times of hardship? For this reason, this research is directed to them, discussing their concerns and helping them to rise up and rid themselves of deficiency. By Allah, they will be granted victory only if they exert their best efforts, trust in Allah, and fulfill the duties to which they have been entrusted.

Motivation and deficiency in modern terms

The quality that enables man to fulfill his duty in order to reach the goal that he seeks is known today as efficiency, growth, and effective ability. As for the inability that afflicts man, it is called inefficiency, negativity, or backwardness.

This subject is worthy of consideration and is expressed in the Ever-Glorious Qur'an through the parable of two men. Allah says,

﴿Allah sets forth the parable (of two men: one) a slave under the dominion of another; he has no power of any sort; and (the other) on whom We have bestowed goodly favors from Ourselves, and he spends thereof (freely), privately and publicly: are the two equal? (By no means,) praise be to Allah. But most of them know not. Allah sets forth (another) parable of two men: one of them dumb, with no power of any sort, a wearisome burden is he to his master, whichever way he directs him, he brings no good: is such a man equal with one who commands justice, and is on a straight way?﴾

(An-Nahl: 75-76)

These Qur'anic words clearly and precisely indicate efficiency in the parable of the two men mentioned by Allah: the parable of the dumb man who has no power of any sort, is a wearisome burden to his master, and is useless no matter which way his master directs him. It is a very precise description of the inefficiency represented in having no power of any sort and in being a wearisome burden to others. The description also implies that this man's deficiency is general; and not in one aspect. This is because whichever way his master directs him, he brings no good.⁽¹⁾

1. Gawdat Sa'id, *Al-Insan Hina Yakunu Kalla Wa Hina Yakun 'Adla*, p. 5.

CHAPTER TWO

The Importance of Being Active and Abandoning Deficiency

Attempting to elevate the religion of Allah and establish it on earth is considered the greatest feat. It has always been the task of the noble long line of Messengers, Prophets, and reformers, since Adam and will continue until Doomsday. How honorable is the one who joins this line and how great is the loss of the one who lags behind!

Almighty Allah grants great rewards both in this life and in the Hereafter to those who work for Islam. In this world, He establishes them firmly, helps them, illuminates their way, strengthens their hearts, and protects them against the temptations of Satan. Allah, the Most High says,

﴿O ye who believe! If ye will help (the cause of) Allah, He will help you, and plant your feet firmly.﴾

(Muhammad: 7)

Concerning the Hereafter, high ranks will be exclusively theirs, the company of the Prophets is their reward, and the frequent look at Allah's Ever-Honorable Face is the utmost bliss they will attain in Paradise.

It should be known that the one who works in the cause of Allah surely works for his own interest by obtaining more good deeds and higher ranks. On the other hand, the one who neglects this duty will remain at a lower level and will lose the opportunity to do good deeds. Allah, the Almighty, says,

﴿And those who work righteousness will make provision for themselves (in heaven).﴾

(Ar-Rum: 44)

Allah rewards the one who works in His cause, lets him see the result of his work, and gives him glad tidings of it in this worldly life before the Hereafter.

Almighty Allah says,

﴿And say, 'Work (righteousness): soon will Allah observe your work, and His Messenger, and the Believers.﴾

(At-Tawbah: 105)

The ineffective person, however, wavers between laziness and boredom, suspicion and doubt, and opposition and criticism, until he dies.

History records the lives and outstanding deeds of those who work in the cause of Allah, whereas those who are ineffective among the trustworthy live on the fringe of history, knowing not how to read its events, make use of them, or even to have an effect on them. They stay motionless until death overtakes without knowledge of their existence by anyone.

Reviewing historical events since Adam (peace be upon him) until the present day, one is sure that there has been no place for the ineffective. The active and trustworthy people, on the other hand, have always been competing to reach the most supreme goal, namely, the pleasure of Allah (Exalted and Glorified be He).

Now, I will mention some aspects that clarify the importance of utilizing one's lifetime, and how much good one will lose if one neglects to invest in it. These aspects are as follows:

1. Brevity of time available to do righteous deeds

Contemplating the conditions of the Muslims at the present time, one deems that most of the active righteous people bring their understanding and commitment to the path of righteousness, at around the age of twenty. This means that each of them has passed almost one third of his lifetime without achieving the desired benefit. This account is based on the Prophet's *hadith* that says,

"The lifetime of (each one of the people of) my Ummah is from sixty to seventy years."⁽¹⁾

This is clearly observed. Supposing that the lifetime of a righteous man is sixty years, then he will only have forty years that matter and they will run as follows: (There are exceptions that do not affect the original rule).

First, this man is going to spend one third of these forty years sleeping, as most people do (there are some people who spend twelve hours a day sleeping, which is half of their lifetime! Few others sleep for less than eight hours a day). This in turn means that thirteen years or so are consumed by sleep! Second, he is going to spend another third of the forty years working. This excludes those who have two or more jobs. So spending a third of one's time at work decreases another thirteen years or so out of the presumptive forty years. Third, according to the above mentioned details, the man who is supposed to live until he is sixty is only going to have about thirteen years in

1. Reported by at-Tirmidhi.

which he may perform his religious obligations as well as manage his worldly affairs including marriage, raising children, visiting relatives and friends, eating, drinking, going out for leisure and shopping, and so on. So how much time will remain to compete for happiness in the Hereafter and secure its delights?

It was for this reason that the righteous predecessors used to decrease the hours normally assigned for sleep, work, and everyday affairs so as to gain more time than what I have cited. Allah knows best.

The biography of Imam an-Nawawi⁽¹⁾ (may Allah have mercy on him) is a remarkable example of how our righteous predecessors utilized their time in performing righteous deeds and how they reduced the time they spent eating, drinking, sleeping, and working so as to invest more time in worshipping Almighty Allah. When Imam an-Nawawi moved from his village of Nawa to Damascus, he began to make use of as much time as he could. He was very determined to study to the extent that for two years he would fall asleep only by leaning on his books.⁽²⁾ He combined study with acts of worship, both obligatory and voluntary, including fasting for many days and spending a part of the night in prayer. Furthermore, he was an ascetic and scrupulous, as well as being careful about not wasting his time. He used to attend twelve lectures a day with his teachers. Hence, he was an example to others by keeping himself engaged in his studies both day and night, and sleeping only when sleep would overcome

1. Yahya ibn Sharaf ibn Mirri, known as Muhyi ad-Din Abu Zakariyya an-Nawawi. He was a grand Mufti, a great Sheikh, a Hafizh, a Shafi'i jurist, and one of the prominent scholars of the Ummah. He was born in 631 A.H. at Nawa, one of the villages of Hur in Northern Syria. He traveled to Damascus and exerted his time in pursuit of knowledge. He has left great useful and diverse works. He died at Nawa in 676 A.H. at the age of forty-five. May Allah have mercy on Him! See *Fawat Al-Wafiyyat* and *Al-A'lam*.

2. Al-Hafizh as-Sakhawi, *Al-Manhal Al-'Adhb Ar-Rawiyy*, p. 39.

him. He was also a model in managing his time. He would say, "Whenever sleep overcomes me, I lean on my books for a while then I arise."⁽¹⁾

Once one of his companions offered him a cucumber but he refused to eat it, saying, "It may moisten my body and then I would need to sleep."⁽²⁾

"He used to have only one meal every twenty-four hours after performing the *'Isha'* prayer, and would drink only one drink [of water] before dawn."⁽³⁾

"His food consisted of bread, which his father used to send from Nawa, and only one kind of extra food: molasses, vinegar, or oil. As for meat, he only used to eat it once a month. He scarcely had two kinds of condiment together."⁽⁴⁾

In general, Imam an-Nawawi kept away from all luxurious means, yet he was full of piety, contentment, and reverence towards Allah both openly and secretly. He always avoided frivolity and flippancy. He laughed little, and rarely enjoyed any leisure time. He was serious, truthful, and was never afraid of the reproaches of those who find fault [as long as he was working in the cause of Allah].⁽⁵⁾

Dear readers, do you see how the righteous made good use of their lifetime and competed with it as in a race? This was only because they realized the value of time and how short it is, and hence took advantage of it in the best way.

1. *Ibid*, p. 115.

2. *Ibid*, p. 120.

3. *Ibid*, p. 121.

4. *Ibid*.

5. *Ibid*.

I think this part of Imam an-Nawawi's biography is sufficient as an example, yet there were tens of righteous predecessors like him (may Allah have mercy on them all).

A more contemporary example is that of Sheikh al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi of Algeria. At the age of seven he began to memorize the Qur'an and after memorizing all of it he learned many texts on the principles of Islamic jurisprudence, *Hadith*, language, rhetoric, and poetry, by heart. He started to teach others when he was fourteen years of age. He traveled to Egypt, Hijaz, and Syria and acquired great knowledge from the scholars of these places, especially those of Medina where he, jointly, with Sheikh Ibn Badis, set up the pillars of the Society of Muslim Scholars of Algeria in 1913 A.C. Later it was fully established in 1931 and became a thorn in the side of the French occupiers.

Al-Ibrahimi used to give ten lessons a day in Wahran, one of the large cities in Algeria, from the time of *Fajr* prayer to '*Isha*' prayer, and then, he would give lectures on Islamic history in some social clubs. He constructed four hundred Islamic schools and two hundred mosques where prayers were performed and lectures delivered. These activities frightened the colonizers and so they exiled him to the desert. Later he returned and became head of the Society of Scholars after the death of Ibn Badis, shouldering an enormous responsibility. Hence he would keep awake day and night for long periods of time. He revived the mettle of the Algerians, and constructed schools and institutes that later produced soldiers who fought to gain Algeria's independence in 1962. At that time, he reaped the fruit of his blessed struggle before he met his Lord, happy and satisfied, in 1965. May Allah have mercy on him!⁽¹⁾

1. Muhammad Rajab al-Bayyumi, *An-Nahdah Al-Islamiyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 251-268.

It may well be said that Islam is a comprehensive religion in which work is considered an act of worship and so is sleep that is based on good intentions. This is quite correct. But my main goal in this connection is to concentrate on the importance of using our time properly, especially when we exclude the time spent in everyday affairs. This remaining time is too little to suffice one's attempt to reach the high ranks in Paradise, for - although most people have good intentions - most of the trustworthy among them may be unaware of the right way of benefiting by the time allotted to them.

2. The great variance of ranks in Paradise

Surely Allah (Exalted and Glorified be He) has promised to admit His obedient servants to Paradise out of His mercy and not because of their deeds. Nevertheless, Allah, the Most Wise, has ordained that those who do their best to obey their Lord and raise the standard of His religion are not to stand side by side with those who neglect doing so, or those who exert lesser effort and are not generous, and so on. With Divine Justice necessitating such variance, Allah the Most High has made gardens of various ranks and levels (in Paradise), and He (Glory be to Him) has always urged His servants to seek the highest degrees. We read in the Ever-Glorious Qur'an,

﴿ Truly the Righteous will be in Bliss: on raised couches will they command a sight (of all things): you will recognize in their Faces the beaming brightness of Bliss. Their thirst will be slaked with Pure Wine sealed; the seal thereof will be musk: and for this let those aspire, who have aspirations. ﴾

(Al-Mutaffifin: 22-26)

And,

﴿And those foremost (in Faith) will be foremost (in the Hereafter). These will be those Nearest to Allah: in Gardens of Bliss: a number of people from those of old, and a few from those of later times. (They will be) on couches encrusted (with gold and precious stones), reclining on them, facing each other. Round about them will (serve) youths of perpetual (freshness), with goblets, (shining) beakers, and cups (filled) out of clear-flowing fountains: no after-ache will they receive therefrom, nor will they suffer intoxication: and with fruits, any that they may select, and the flesh of fowls, any that they may desire. And (there will be) companions with beautiful, big, and lustrous eyes, like unto pearls well-guarded. A Reward for the Deeds of their past (life). No frivolity will they hear therein, nor any mischief, only the saying, 'Peace! Peace'﴾

(Al-Waqi`ah: 10-26)

Then Almighty Allah describes the degrees of those who will be below them in rank. Such descriptions are mentioned in Surat ar-Rahman and other Surahs where Allah invites His servants to aspire and seek those high ranks. Suffice it to know that Almighty Allah makes it clear that even the great Companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are not given the same degree although they are foremost and nearest to Allah. So how will people like us be treated? Almighty Allah says,

﴿Not equal among you are those who spent (freely) and fought, before the Victory, (with those who did so later). Those are higher in rank than those who spent (freely) and fought afterwards. But to all has Allah promised a goodly (reward). And Allah is well acquainted with all that you do.﴾

(Al-Hadid: 10)

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) told us in many *hadiths* about the greatness of the highest levels in Paradise. He called people to pursue them, and explained how great it is to reach them. Once he (peace be upon him) said, *"Surely, in Paradise, there are (lofty) mansions whose backs are seen through their fronts and whose fronts are seen through their backs."* A Bedouin got up and asked, "For whom are they (prepared), O Messenger of Allah?" He replied,

"For whoever says good words, feeds (others), observes fasting continually, and performs prayer at night while people are asleep."⁽¹⁾

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said,

"Surely, in Paradise there are a hundred ranks, which Almighty Allah has prepared for those who strive in His cause. What is between each two ranks is like (the distance) between heaven and earth. So if you are to ask Allah for Paradise, ask Him for al-Firdaws, for it is in the middle of Paradise, over it is the Throne of (Allah) the All-Merciful, and from it are the rivers of Paradise made to spring."⁽²⁾

It is narrated on the authority of Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) that Umm ar-Rubayyi`, the daughter of al-Bara' and mother of Harithah ibn Suraqah, came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, "O Prophet of Allah! Do you not wish that you should tell me about Harithah? (He had been killed in the battle of Badr with the arrow of an unknown archer.) If he is in Paradise, I will persevere patiently, and if not, I will weep for him as much as I can." He (peace be upon him) said,

1. Reported by at-Tirmidhi and Ahmad.

2. Reported by al-Bukhari.

"O Umm Harithah! They (i.e. that which has been prepared for martyrs) are gardens in Paradise, and your son has reached al-Firdaws, the Highest (rank)."⁽¹⁾

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"The image of the first group that will enter Paradise will be like the image of the moon when it is full, and (the image of) those (who will enter) after them (will be) like the most shining planet."⁽²⁾

It is also narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *"Surely, the residents of Paradise see the residents of the mansions above them as they see the brilliant star that is about to set in the sky in the east or in the west because of precedence among them."* The listeners said, "O Messenger of Allah! Are these ranks for the Prophets and no one else can reach them?" He said, *"No, by Him in Whose hand is my soul, (they are also for) men who believe in Allah and believe the Messengers."*⁽³⁾

Describing the difference in ranks in Paradise, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"Two gardens whose round vessels and contents are of silver, and two (other) gardens whose round vessels and contents are of gold..."⁽⁴⁾

The Prophet's Companions were aware of these differences which is why lady `A'ishah said, "A man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! By Allah, you are more beloved to me than my own self, you are more beloved to me than my wife, and more beloved to me than my children. When in my house I remember you. I cannot help coming to look at you, and when I

1. Reported by al-Bukhari.

2. Reported by al-Bukhari.

3. Reported by al-Bukhari.

4. Reported by al-Bukhari.

remember that you and I will die, I realize that you will be raised with the Prophets when you enter Paradise, but I am afraid that I will not see you if I enter Paradise.' The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not reply until Jibril descended with this verse: '*All who obey Allah and the Messenger are in the Company of those on whom is the Grace of Allah, of the Prophets (who teach), the Sincere (lovers of Truth), the martyrs, and the Righteous (who do good): Ah! How beautiful is their Company*'.⁽¹⁾

Now dear readers, consider this group of good dreams to know how the righteous people, who work persistently for the sake of Allah, are rewarded with greater ranks than those given to others:

1. Salih al-Barrad said, "I saw Zurarah ibn Awfa⁽²⁾ (in a dream) after his death and I said to him, 'May Allah have mercy on you! What was said to you and what did you say (in reply)?' He did not answer me, so I said, 'So what has Allah done to you?' He said, 'He has bestowed His Grace on me.' I said, 'What about `Abu al-`Ala' ibn Yazid⁽³⁾, brother of Mutraf?' He said, 'He is in the Highest Ranks.' I said, 'So what are the best deeds that have helped you attain this?' He said, 'Trusting in Allah and not hoping to live long.'⁽⁴⁾
2. When Muhammad ibn Sirin⁽⁵⁾ died, one of his companions grieved greatly for him. Later, in a dream he saw Ibn Sirin in a good condition, so he said to him, "O my brother! I see you are in a

1. (An-Nisa': 69). The hadith was mentioned by Ibn al-Qayyim in *Hadi Al-Arwah*.

2. Zurarah ibn Awfa al-`Amiri al-Harashi, known as Abu Hajib, was a judge of Basra and a pious, trustworthy man. He died while performing prayer in 93 A.H. See *At-Taqrīb*.

3. Abu al-`Ala' Yazid ibn ash-Shukhayr, not Ibn Yazid, died in 111 A.H. See *Sifat As-Safwah*.

4. Al-Hafizh ibn al-Qayyim, *Ar-Ruh*, p. 36.

5. Muhammad ibn Sirin al-Basri was trustworthy and a great worshipper. He died in 110 A.H. See *At-Taqrīb*.

pleasant condition but what about al-Hasan?"⁽¹⁾ He replied, "He is seventy degrees above me." He said, "Why should he be (above you) although we used to consider you better than him?" He said, "This is because of his long grief."⁽²⁾

3. When Rabi'ah⁽³⁾ died, one of her friends saw her in a dream wearing a garment of fine silk and a veil of heavy brocade, even though she had been shrouded with a veil and a *jubbah* both made of wool. So she said to her, "Where are the *jubbah* and the woolen veil with which I shrouded you?" Rabi'ah said, "By Allah, they were taken away from me and I have been given instead these two which you see me wearing. My shrouds were folded, sealed, and raised in *'Illiyun*⁽⁴⁾ and I will receive their perfect reward on the Day of Resurrection." The woman said, "Is this why you were working (righteously) in the worldly life?" She replied, "This is too simple if compared to what I have seen from the signs of Allah's honoring His friends!" The woman said, "So what about 'Abdah⁽⁵⁾, the daughter of Abu Kilab?" Rabi'ah said, "Ah! By Allah, she has preceded us to the High Ranks." The woman asked, "Why has she preceded you when people thought you were more pious than her?" She replied, "She never cared about what condition she came in the morning or the evening in this worldly life." The companion said, "And what about Abu Malik?"⁽⁶⁾ Rabi'ah said, "He visits Allah,

1. Al-Hasan Ibn Yasar al-Basri was a trustworthy jurist and famous for his virtuousness. He died in 110 A.H. at around the age of ninety.

2. Al-Hafizh ibn al-Qayyim, *Ar-Ruh*, p. 37.

3. The well-known devout Muslim Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyyah. See *Sifat as-Safwah*.

4. *'Illiyun* here may be the *'Illiyun*, which is mentioned in Surat al-Mutaffifin (verses 18-21). (Translator)

5. In *Sifat as-Safwah*, her name is 'Ubaydah. She was an ascetic devout Muslim.

6. Abu Malik al-'Abid used to perform two hundred *Rak'ahs* everyday. See *Sifat as-Safwah*.

Glorified and Exalted be He, whenever he wishes." The woman said, "And what about Bishr ibn Mansur?"⁽¹⁾ Rabi`ah said, "What a reward! By Allah, he has been given more than he ever wished for." The woman said, "What will you advise me to do to get close to Allah, the Almighty?" Rabi`ah said, "Mention Allah as much as you can and soon you will rejoice at (the consequence of) this in your grave."⁽²⁾

4. One of the companions of Ibn Jurayj⁽³⁾ said, "In a dream, I saw myself coming to a burial ground in Makkah and I saw something like a large tent surrounding it. One of the graves had a special tent over it and a lote-tree beside it. I approached the grave, greeted its dweller, then I saw Muslim ibn Khalid az-Zanji⁽⁴⁾ before me. I greeted him and said, 'O Abu Khalid! Why is there a general tent covering these graves while your grave has a special tent and a lote-tree?' He said, 'Because I used to fast a lot.' I said, 'So where is Ibn Jurayj's grave? I used to sit with him and I would like to greet him.' He said, 'How far we are from knowing so! Ibn Jurayj's book (of deeds) has been raised in *`Illiyun*.'"⁽⁵⁾

Such dreams are not to be taken in their absolute form to prove the difference in ranks of the persons mentioned above. They can, however, be recalled because they motivate one's religious enthusiasm.

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1. Bishr ibn Mansur as-Salimi, known as Abu Muhammad al-Azdi al-Basri was a truthful devout Muslim and an ascetic. He died in 180 A.H. See *At-Taqrīb*.
 2. Al-Hafizh ibn al-Qayyim, *Ar-Ruh*, p. 38.
 3. `Abd al-Malik ibn `Abd al-`Aziz ibn Jurayj al-Makki was a trustworthy and virtuous jurist. He died in 150 A.H. after the age of seventy. See *At-Taqrīb*.
 4. Muslim ibn Khalid, known as az-Zanji was a truthful jurist. He died in 179 A.H. See *At-Taqrīb*.
 5. Al-Hafizh ibn al-Qayyim, *Ar-Ruh*, p. 44.

Thus, all the aforementioned verses and *hadiths*, as well as the dreams, which are mentioned for the reason pinpointed above, indicate the difference in ranks and degrees in the sight of Allah. This variance is the motivation that pushed worshippers, ascetics, and *Mujahidun* to exert themselves in obeying Allah, the Almighty.

Al-Harith ibn Hisham (may Allah be pleased with him) converted to Islam on the day of the Conquest (of Makkah), with a pure intention. Then after the Prophet's death, he was to travel to Syria to fight in the cause of Allah. When he was about to leave, the people of Makkah came to see him off. On seeing them weeping because of his departure, he said, "By Almighty Allah, I am not going because I want to leave you or because I want to live in another city. Rather, it is for Islam. Remember that when Islam came, normal and simple men from the clan of Quraysh supported it. By Allah, had it been that the mountains of Makkah were of gold and we spent them in the cause of Allah we would have never reached the blessing of one day of theirs, so let us try to share them in the Hereafter." Then he left for Syria to strive in the cause of Allah and his family departed with him. He (may Allah be pleased with him) was finally granted the honor of martyrdom.

In addition, Imam Ibn `Awn⁽¹⁾ was an ascetic and an active worshipper. One of his companions once said, "I know a man who has been trying for twenty years to do in one day what Ibn `Awn used to do in any of his days, but he cannot."⁽²⁾

1. `Abdullah ibn `Awa ibn Artiban was a model Imam, scholar of Basra, and *Hafizh*. He died in 151 A.H. at the age of eighty-five. See *Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'*.

2. Muhammad al-Shareef, *Nuzhat Al-Fudala'*, vol. 1, p. 544.

Imam Sufyan ath-Thawri said, "I wish I could do in my whole lifetime what Ibn al-Mubarak⁽¹⁾ used to do in one year, but I cannot even do what he used to do in three days."⁽²⁾

Consider the words of Sufyan, who himself was an example of pure asceticism and faithful worship. One of the righteous predecessors said about him, "In his time, Sufyan was like Abu Bakr and `Umar in their time." Another said, "I think it may happen tomorrow that Sufyan should come as a witness from Almighty Allah against His creatures and Allah would say to them, "You did not see your Prophet but you have seen Sufyan." If this was the case with Sufyan, then what about `Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak! May Allah have mercy on and be pleased with both of them!

Hence, the trustworthy Muslims of our time should seek these high ranks with all their strength and talents. Neglecting this pursuit is a clear sign of grave inefficiency. A person does not accept another to precede him in rank or property in this worldly life, and feels sad if this happens. Will he then be pleased to be preceded in Paradise and high ranks by others while he remains incapable of following suit?

The adornments of this world are seen, but the beauty of the Hereafter is unseen. Thus, the rightly-guided pursue the greatness of the unseen (and everlasting beauty), whereas the wretched are busy with the ornaments that will soon perish.

1. `Abdullah Ibn al-Mubarak at-Turki was given the title "Sheikh of Islam". He was a great Imam and scholar who worked and fought in the cause of Allah. He was born in 118 A.H. and died in 181 A.H. May Allah have mercy on Him! See *Siyar A`lam an-Nubala`*.

2. Muhammad al-Shareef, *Nuzhat Al-Fudala`*, vol. 2, p. 655.

3. Inactivity and contentment with inefficiency may steer one away from constancy

If a man is content with his inefficiency and remains satisfied with leisure, he may forget about noble ideals, and start to admire the condition of the ignorant and those who are astray. Then he may keep company with them and worse still, imitate them. This will no doubt lead him to be less committed and less constant and to rely on refuted falsehood. How much good will he lose and how much evil will be inflicted on him!

This is no exaggeration, rather it is the reality of this worldly life. I know a man who was pious and trustworthy, but was, however, inefficient, not knowing how to devise a plan or how to direct his way. Eventually he descended to the state of the immoral people and even completely stopped performing prayers.

I know another man who was trustworthy and used to work for the sake of Allah, but he followed his vain desires as well as his property and trade. Thus he became inefficient and deteriorated more and more until he became a lover of worldly pleasures; doing his best to satisfy his desires. There is now no difference between him and the rest of the weak Muslims.

This gradual withdrawal from constancy is the inevitable result that befalls the inefficient person, because he has made himself unconcerned with work or thought. What a dangerous plight leisure is, and when accompanied by wealth and youth, one is more likely to lose constancy and have his heart corrupted.

CHAPTER THREE

Aspects of Inefficiency

The nature and intensity of the aspects of inefficiency differ from one person to another. This may be clarified through the following:

1. Neglecting *Da`wah*, enjoining the right, and forbidding the wrong

In the Muslim society there are many righteous people who seek Allah's pleasure and the good of the Hereafter. These people perform many voluntary acts of worship, but they do not implement their piety into work that will help to establish the religion of Allah, the Almighty on earth. You may even find them secluding themselves from *Da`wah*. They scarcely enjoin the right or forbid the wrong. They go to their worldly work in earnest and seriousness, but they do nothing when they see one of their colleagues going astray or a pious person hampered by lethargy. And when people are thirsty for their advice, they say nothing.

It would be excusable if this was their state in all conditions, but unfortunately they are heavy when obliged to call to the religion of Allah but active when doing work that brings them money. They may spend most of the day and night collecting worldly, perishable goods and neglecting the supreme Islamic teachings.

There are other Muslims who confine themselves to seeking distinction in their work and striving to excel in their field of specialization. Although this is beneficial to Islam, it has its limitations. It can be surpassed by other greater beneficial acts for Islam and Muslims which can be achieved at the hands of those very people if they direct their efforts to the correct way that would produce the greatest results for Islam and the Muslims.

Observing the *Sirah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him), one finds that his life was consumed for the sake of *Da`wah*. He (peace be upon him) used to teach his Companions that the Muslim should strongly participate in steering life and managing the affairs of society. The following is a list of events from the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) through which you can learn how he called people to Almighty Allah, persevered patiently, enjoined the right, forbade the wrong, strove, and fought until his dying day. His life was a model for the trustworthy, active Muslim:

1. The Prophet's worship in the cave of Hira' for long nights before the mission.
2. The beginning of revelation and the suffering he (peace be upon him), underwent because of it.
3. The temporary cease of revelation and how this troubled the Prophet (peace be upon him).
4. Inviting lady Khadijah, `Ali, Abu Bakr, and others (may Allah be pleased with them all) to Islam.
5. Secretly calling people to Islam for about three years.
6. Inviting people to Islam publicly and how his people harmed him in return and how hard this was on him (peace be upon him).

7. The harm and torture inflicted on the Prophet's Companions and the effect this had on him.
8. The ridicule, denial, accusations, and physical harm that the Prophet (peace be upon him) confronted with patience.
9. The disbelievers' attempt to tempt the Prophet (peace be upon him) with wealth and women.
10. The polytheists' blockading the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions in the mountain pass of Abu Talib, and how they boycotted them and caused them to suffer from extreme hunger.
11. The polytheists' obstinacy and how they interrogated the Prophet (peace be upon him) with many questions aiming to frustrate him.
12. The deaths of Abu Talib and Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with both of them) and the effect of this on the Prophet (peace be upon him).
13. The Prophet's hard experience (peace be upon him) at-Ta'if.
14. Inviting the Arab tribes to Islam and their stubborn denial.
15. The Prophet's and his Companions' emigration to Madinah and how the Quraysh tried to kill him several times.
16. The enmity of the hypocrites towards the Prophet (peace be upon him) their plots against him, and their attempts to murder him.
17. The enmity of the Jews towards the Prophet (peace be upon him) their plots against him, and their attempts to murder him.
18. The betrayal of the Jews to Muhammad (peace be upon him) and their denial of his prophethood.
19. The Jews' arbitrariness and how they questioned the Prophet (peace be upon him) excessively that reflected their obstinacy and denial.

20. The battles led by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and what was said about them, especially the battles of Uhud, al-Khandaq (the Trench), and Hunayn.
21. The harm that the Prophet (peace be upon him) received to his honor.
22. The harm that the Prophet (peace be upon him) went through at the hands of some hard-hearted Arabs.
23. The Prophet's patience upon the martyrdom of his relatives and Companions (may Allah be pleased with them).
24. The Prophet's firm endurance of extreme hunger.
25. The Prophet's suffering from his illness and the agonies of death.⁽¹⁾

This list of events clearly shows that the Prophet (peace be upon him) suffered a great deal in all aspects of life: in his own self, his household, his Companions, his relatives, his *Da`wah*, etc. But through them all, he (peace be upon him) persevered patiently in the face of all these trials. He never stopped working and was always patient, greatly submissive (towards the Almighty), and highly content. He was never seen to be dissatisfied or negligent; rather, he undertook the responsibilities of *Da`wah* in the best possible ways.

The suffering or tribulation that the trustworthy people today face is light compared to what the Prophet (peace be upon him) faced. Hence, they should not relax, otherwise their *Da`wah* and religion will be corrupted by the disbelievers and those who are iniquitous. These brilliant footsteps of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were later followed by his Companions, the righteous predecessors, and whoever followed them until the present time. They did not rest, and they bore

1. This index has been derived from Ibn Hisham, *As-Sirah An-Nabawiyyah* (The Prophet's Biography).

the trust and generously offered sacrifices for the preservation of *Da`wah* and the interest of the Muslim *Ummah*.

What is surprising is that the one who neglects *Da`wah*, enjoining the right, and forbidding the wrong does not, in many cases, admit his inefficiency. On the contrary, he often presents worthless excuses perhaps saying that others are the cause of his inefficiency. He may also apologize by saying that he has such and such problems. These are usually groundless excuses, for everyone has problems and grievances. The Prophet (peace be upon him) never abandoned *Da`wah* and never despaired. However, some of the trustworthy *Da`iyahs* today abandon *Da`wah* as soon as they experience any form of harm from their spouses, parents, children, or when they suffer financial stress, fear, hunger, or illness.

At such times they then apologize for relinquishing the pursuit of noble ideals by saying that they are caused to be distracted by thorny problems! How surprising that is! Almighty Allah says,

﴿Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, 'We believe', and that they will not be tested? We did test those before them, and Allah will certainly know those who are true from those who are false.﴾

(Al-`Ankabut: 2-3)

Indeed man is affected by the problems he faces, but he should not reveal this effect to people unless it is absolutely necessary. Man should always continue to persistently perform the work of *Da`wah*, and forget about these problems which may mistakenly be considered obstacles. Let him ask himself: Did he abandon his worldly affairs when he faced those calamities? As he did not do so, *Da`wah* is preferred over worldly affairs.

2. Grudging one's property or reluctance to give it

Da`wah is in great need of financial support, especially at the present time, as money is at the center of every activity. Imagine the expenses of preparing a satellite that will be employed to propagate virtue and fight against the immorality that other satellites propagate. Imagine the cost of establishing a complex in a poor African or Asian country to serve as a starting point for fighting against Christianization and those who seek to destroy our creed and morals. Imagine how Muslims that are oppressed and humiliated in different parts of the world are in dire need of financial assistance to settle their affairs and establish themselves firmly. Consider how there are investment projects, industrial and cultural, in countries where occupants grind them through the World Bank or conditioned aid.

Looking at our surrounding environment, one observes that money is greatly needed to print useful books that can be distributed among the masses, support Qur'an-memorization centers, provide villages and desert-residents with materials that will help them in their religious and worldly affairs, contribute to the educational centers that maintain the religiosity of the Muslim youth and present worldly benefits for them, and so on.

These are just a few examples which indicate how badly *Da`wah* needs financial support.

The question is: Where is the Muslim business person who will loan to Almighty Allah without account, conditions, hesitation, or boredom? Business people of this kind, even though they exist, rarely come forward to help. Most merchants and business people are swayed by their desires and personal interests. If they give, they give little that satisfies no need.

There is a kind of righteous business people, who on being reminded about the above-mentioned forms of charity expenditure, turn to other forms which are of lesser importance like constructing big mosques in their cities, especially large cities, which are already full of mosques. These business people may also prefer to distribute money among those who they think are needy, leaving others who are in difficult circumstances. Thus, their priorities are neither well regulated nor clear.

Among the righteous predecessors there were great business people who knew how to loan to Almighty Allah the beautiful loan and how to support His religion with their goods. A brilliant example of those pious business people was `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him). He spent a great deal of his wealth in the cause of Allah to the extent that the Prophet (peace be upon him) rejoiced and praised him. Although `Uthman's generosity is well-known, I will quote some of his activities that serve as a good reminder for us all.

When `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was besieged by those who had dissented from him, he said to them, "I remind you of Allah. Do you know that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) came to Medina when there was no (source of) sweet water except in the well of Rumah, and he said, *'Who will buy it and take from it just like any (other) Muslim, and there will be a better one for him in Paradise (as a reward)?'* I bought it. But you are now preventing me to drink from it so that I have to drink salty water?" They said, "By Allah, yes."

He said, "I remind you of Allah and Islam. Do you know that once the mosque became too small to take all the people? The Prophet said, *'Who will buy a piece (of land) for a better one that will be for him in Paradise?'* I bought it and joined it to the mosque. But you are now preventing me to perform prayers in it?" They said, "By Allah, yes."⁽¹⁾

1. Muhammad al-Sharceef, *Nuzhat Al-Fudala'*, vol. 1, p. 86.

The story of `Uthman buying the well of Rumah indicates his generosity and virtue (may Allah be pleased with him)! When the Muhajirun came to Madinah, they disliked drinking the water there. A man from the family of Ghifar had a well called Rumah from which he sold a water skin for half a bushel. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him, "*Will you sell it for a well in Paradise?*" The man said, "O Messenger of Allah! I have no other well. I cannot (sell it)."

When `Uthman was informed of that, he bought the well for thirty-five thousand dirhams, and then he went to the Prophet and said, "Will you make for me like that which you made for him, (namely), a well in Paradise if I buy it?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Yes." He said, "I have (already) bought it and given it to the Muslims."⁽¹⁾

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "`Uthman bought Paradise from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) twice: on the day of Rumah and on the day of the Army of Distress (of the Tabuk expedition)."⁽²⁾

`Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Every Friday, since I embraced Islam, I have freed a slave unless I had none (no money), on which I freed one afterwards."⁽³⁾

He also equipped the Army of Distress in the Tabuk expedition. That army was given this name "of Distress" because of the difficulty of financing it and of the time when it took place; since it was during summer in the scorching heat. `Uthman offered so much money that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "*`Uthman will not be harmed by whatever he does after (what he has done) today.*"⁽⁴⁾

1. Muhammad al-Shareef, *Nuzhat Al-Fudala'*, vol. 1, p. 72.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

Many Muslims came in procession to offer their properties for the sake of Allah's religion, following in the footsteps of `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) and his companions and preferring the religious cause to themselves even though they were in distress.

The wealthy Muslims should follow this example. They should hasten to support the religion of Allah with everything they possess. Those who only give some of their surplus can never be equal to the traders from among the righteous predecessors. How could they be like those who loaned to Allah a beautiful and great loan!

Let no one think that this speech is only directed to the well-to-do. Rather, every Muslim should give according to his capacity. A dirham may be of more reward than a thousand dirhams. A Companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was bringing a few dates at which the hypocrites laughed, but Almighty Allah eternalized his deed in His Book where He demeaned those hypocrites and told them of a painful chastisement.

Abu Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "When we were commanded to give in charity - that is to say in the Tabuk expedition - we started to carry (things) for one another in return for a payment. Abu `Uqayl brought half a *Sa`* (a cubic measure of varying magnitude) and another person came with more than that. Thereupon the hypocrites said, 'Surely Allah does not need the charity of this person, and the other one has done so only out of hypocrisy.' Then Allah revealed, *﴿Those who slander such of the Believers as give themselves freely to (deeds of) charity, as well as those who give according to their means ...﴾* (At-Tawbah: 79)"⁽¹⁾

1. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*.

“Uthman ibn `Affan had prepared a caravan to Syria comprising two hundred camels with their saddlebags, blankets, and two hundred ounces (of gold). He gave all this in charity and then gave a hundred camels with their saddles, blankets, and bags. He brought a thousand dinars and placed them on the Prophet's lap. Then he gave more in charity until the total of what he had given reached nine hundred camels and a hundred horses, in addition to the money.

`Abd ar-Rahman ibn `Awf presented two hundred ounces of silver. Abu Bakr brought all the property he had leaving nothing for his family. `Umar gave half of his property. Al-`Abbas presented a lot of money. Talhah, Sa`d ibn `Ubadah, and Muhammad ibn Maslamah all brought money. `Asim ibn `Adiyy gave ninety loads of dates. People came one after another to present alms, great and little, to the extent that some of them presented one or two half bushels because they could not offer anything more than that. Women sent musk, anklets, earrings, and rings, according to their means. Only the hypocrites were stingy.”⁽¹⁾

In the poor Muslim countries some people donate petty sums but they leave a great effect on the hearts of people and Allah blesses these sums so that they become as effective as great sums of money.

3. Non-utilized talents

Allah (Exalted and Glorified be He) divides potentialities and talents among people. He may give some people specific potentialities and greater and more exclusive talents than others. If these people use these talents properly, they win much, otherwise they lose, fail, and become inefficient.

1. Safiyy ar-Rahman al-Mubarak, *Ar-Rahiq Al-Makhtum*, p. 512.

Here are two examples of failure to make good use of talent:

- A. I know a pious man who is very intelligent and who has great powers of reasoning and understanding. He is a brilliant officer. I kept trying to convince him to invest his intelligence and showed him some suitable ways of utilizing it. I urged him many times but unfortunately he did not listen. His life is consumed between his work and his house so that he scarcely goes out of this circle. I am sure that nothing made him so indolent but absolute inefficiency that is unrelated to circumstances or some other cause.
- B. A friend of mine studied *Shari`ah* by affiliation. I suppose - and Allah knows best - that he is a righteous *Da`iyah*. I tried to encourage him to preach to people or read to them, but he was always reluctant to do so because of shyness, although he is inherently courageous. Years have passed away but he has not yet benefited by his knowledge, rather, he might have forgotten most of it.

There are many other examples of talented and skilled people who do not make good use of the blessings that Allah granted them simply because of their inefficiency.

It is significant to consider the example of Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) who - when perceiving his managerial talent regarding provisions - said to the king,

﴿Set me over the store-houses of the land: I am a good keeper, Knowledgeable.﴾

(Yusuf: 55)

In addition, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to distribute tasks among his Companions according to their talents and potentialities, and they used to obey him without refraining or feeling

shy. For example, the experienced leader, Khalid ibn al-Walid, was not assigned a leader of the Muslim army in the raid on Mu'tah, and yet he assumed leadership (when it was necessary) because he knew that he was able.⁽¹⁾ No wonder he was successful in his *Jihad* since the Prophet (peace be upon him) described him as "Allah's Ever-Unsheathed Sword."⁽²⁾ Moreover, Zayd ibn Thabit (may Allah be pleased with him) learned foreign languages,⁽³⁾ while Ubayy ibn Ka'b was very brilliant in reciting the Ever-Glorious Qur'an to the extent that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "*The best of you in reading (the Qur'an) is Ubayy.*"⁽⁴⁾ Mu'adh ibn Jabal, on his part, was so distinguished in *Fiqh* that he was described as "the most knowledgeable among the Companions concerning the lawful and the prohibited."⁽⁵⁾ Furthermore, Mus'ab (may Allah be pleased with him) was an ambassador, and Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) were ministers. Besides, there were scribes of the divine revelation who were talented in writing.

In the course of history, people endowed with talents unhesitatingly made good use of them, so their life stories were written with letters of light. As for the inactive and the disinclined, they died unrenowned; we think they were deprived of the reward of undertaking lofty tasks, which, we think, was given to those who devoted themselves to benefit others. Almighty Allah knows best.

1. Al-Hafizh Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah Wa An-Nihayah*. Khalid died in Hims, but some said he died in Madinah, in 21 A.H.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.* He died in 45 A.H. in Madinah.

4. *Ibid.* He died in 19 A.H. in Madinah and the *hadith* was transmitted by at-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan*.

5. *Ibid.* He died in 18 A.H. in Syria.

4. Confusion about priorities

This is one of the most grievous aspects of the inefficiency of the trustworthy. A trustworthy person may spend his lifetime in a vicious circle of minor good deeds and scarcely trying his hand at major priorities. This confusion - as an aspect of inefficiency - is a means that Iblis (Satan) uses to confuse people. He tries to make evil appear fair in their eyes, and if he fails to tempt them, he adorns for them the path of less rewarded good deeds so as to distract them from the path of more important good deeds.

If you want to have a clear picture of confusion regarding the arrangement of priorities, then contemplate the case of a man who wants to build a house. He devotes all his potentialities and vital interests to this purpose and delays urgent matters. You may see him neglecting many duties under the pretext that he is busy constructing his house. This process may take years during which he becomes accustomed to clinging to the earth and forgets lofty ideals. This temporary apathy and inefficiency may eventually become complete and permanent.

Another person may busy himself throughout his life with what he calls domestic duties (towards his wife and children) leaving *Da'wah* aside and paying no attention to the nation's interests. If he gives them - his wife and children - their rights moderately as the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do, and then indulges in other priorities, Almighty Allah will surely keep his family for him and enlarge his reward.

5. When the trustworthy person defames his trustworthy brothers

One of the most obvious and grievous aspects of inefficiency is when a trustworthy Muslim vows to uncover the vices of others,

especially the trustworthy.⁽¹⁾ He does so at conferences, public meetings, and through the mass media. Does he not know that it is unacceptable for a trustworthy person to disagree with another who is more trustworthy than he is or with a group of trustworthy people? He should be sure that Satan has whispered evil to him and has made fair in his eyes this defamation under the claim that he is only trying to reveal the truth. Perhaps some of the defamer's words are true, yet they are mixed with bias and a thirst for revenge and vain desires. In Islam, it is a rule that amendment of other's works or sayings is a sin as long as it is accompanied by personal vain desires, underhanded dealings, and a desire for revenge. Moreover, such amendment is neither accepted nor rewarded.

It is indeed unfortunate that a trustworthy person accuses a great number of people of something that is based on mere suspicion and illusion. What will this poor person do when - on the Day of Judgment - he will be asked to prove his accusations since he will have nothing substantial?

The righteous predecessors never publicly defamed anybody except certain ideological sects who excessively and unanimously innovated in religion. Along with this, they were greatly conscious and watchful of Allah, and preserved their tongues against defamation as much as they could. Rather, they were above the example of the poor defamer under discussion. "They strictly refrained from adopting such an immoral attitude, which Iblis dresses in disguise of advising and enjoining the right. Every conscientious person can easily recognize this."⁽²⁾

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1. He who does this act of defamation is not one of the trustworthy, for he does not deserve this honor, but I describe him as such to emphasize people's perceptions of him because of how he pretends he is trustworthy. (Author)
 2. Muhammad Ahmad ar-Rashid, *Al-'Awa'iq*, p. 149.

Some scholars were blamed for defaming virtuous scholars and trustworthy Muslims until they became known as defamers.⁽¹⁾ So what would be the position of the one who defames nations, groups, and organizations without religiously-based or logical evidence, and without being urged by piety or conscience? This person has lost much because he did not have peace in his heart concerning his relation with Muslims.

Imam adh-Dhahabi⁽²⁾ (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "No attention should be paid to the speech of one's counterparts if it is proved to be based on bias or bigotry. Moreover, it should not be propagated. There are books that contain discrediting and astonishing matters. Yet, the wise man bridles his bias and the flesh of a scholar is bitter. Some ignorant and astray people spoke evil of some of the greatest Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who said, *"No one is more patient upon hearing something damaging than Allah; they claim that He has a son, and yet He surely sustains and cures them."*⁽³⁾

Imam adh-Dhahabi also said, "It is known that a lot of the vilification of counterparts against one another is disregarded, especially if the man who is defamed is judged trustworthy by some Muslims whose sayings are perceived to be impartial."⁽⁴⁾

1. For example, Imam As-Shawkani was blamed for discrediting some scholars and trustworthy Muslims. See Imam Ash-Shawkani's words in *Al-Badr At-Talî*. Also, Ibn Hazm was blamed for the same fault. See *Siyar A'lam An-Nubala'*.
2. His full name is Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn `Uthman, known as the Hafizh Shams ad-Din Abu `Abdullah at-Turkumani adh-Dhahabi. He was the best scholar of Hadith in his time and very interested in pursuing hadiths. He started to travel for this purpose since he was eighteen and compiled useful extensive books. He died in 748 A.H. a short time after he became blind. May Allah be pleased with him! See *Tabaqat Ash-Shafi'iyyah Al-Kubra*. But, do not pay attention to As-Subki's discrediting his teacher Adh-Dhahabi in this book. However, Allah knows best.
3. *Ibid*. The hadith has been quoted from *Sahih Muslim*.
4. *Ibid*.

He said, "Anyway, it is probable that counterparts speak against one another, but hiding this talk is better than propagating it, unless contemporary scholars agree that a certain scholar is blameworthy. If so, their saying is acceptable. However, Allah knows best."⁽¹⁾

He also said, "It is known that competing the counterparts' speech against one another is regarded as weak. May Allah forgive us all!"⁽²⁾

Ibn al-Qayyim⁽³⁾ (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "The *Shari'ah* and wisdom decree that the one whose good deeds are numerous and great and who has a palpable impact on Islamic activity is tolerated more than others. Similarly, he is forgiven concerning matters that are not forgivable to others. This is because a sin is like scum; much water is not spoiled with it but little water is spoiled with the least quantity of it."⁽⁴⁾

One of the righteous predecessors said, "I think that when a man is busy observing the vices of others, this means that he is unconscious of his own."⁽⁵⁾

This discussion should end with the words of one of the righteous predecessors, who was in the habit of advising and reminding others. He said, "I have never seen anything worse than a man having little

1. *Ibid.*

2. Muhammad Ahmad ar-Rashid, *Al-'Awa'iq*, p. 149.

3. His full name is Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr ibn Ayyub az-Zura'i ad-Dimishqi, known as Shams ad-Din ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah al-Hanbali. He was a great Sheikh and Imam born in 691. He was courageous, knowledgeable, and aware of scholars' differences in opinions and the schools of the righteous predecessors. He was so fond of his teacher, Sheikh of Islam Ibn Taymiyah, that he never contradicted any of his sayings; he used to stand for all of them. He used to perform (voluntary) prayers persistently and recite the Qur'an a lot. He was well mannered and kind and died in Damascus in 751. See *Ad-Durar Al-Kaminah*.

4. Muhammad Ahmad ar-Rashid, *Al-'Awa'iq*, p. 139.

5. *Ibid*, p. 149.

knowledge of himself and persistently reviewing the shortcomings of others. This error foils his deeds, corrupts his heart, quickly destroys him, perpetuates his grief, and makes him more liable to people's hatred. It induces him to like flattery, conceit, and leadership."⁽¹⁾

6. Weak cultural education

Culture is a contemporary term that was unknown in the modern sense to the Arabs, though their linguistic definition of it bears some connection with the modern meaning. Thinkers are hesitant to determine a comprehensive definition of culture.⁽²⁾ However, some definitions are close to the actual use of the word. For instance, it is defined as, "A combination of moral attributes and social values that a man receives from his birth. Thus, culture is the environment in which a man formulates his temperament and character."⁽³⁾

It is also defined as, "The living picture of a nation, since it determines its main features, the basis of its existence, and regulates its advance in life and delineates its way in it. It is the creed in which the nation believes, the morals about which they care, its system to which they adhere, the heritage they keep against oblivion, and the thought they seek to propagate and spread."⁽⁴⁾

It is said: Learn something about everything to be cultured, and learn everything about one thing to be a scholar.⁽⁵⁾

Culture for the trustworthy people is indispensable, whether Islamic, humanitarian, or international. A trustworthy Muslim needs

1. *Ibid*, p. 147.

2. `Umar al-Ashqar, *Nahwa Thaqafah Islamiyyah Asliyyah*, p. 17.

3. `Abdullah Al-Yusuf, *Ash-Shakhsiyyah An-Najihah*, p. 213.

4. `Umar al-Khatib, *Lamahat Fi Ath-Thaqafah Al-Islamiyyah*, p. 13.

5. `Umar al-Ashqar, *Nahwa Thaqafah Islamiyyah Asliyyah*, p. 18.

culture to perceive the surrounding state of affairs without exaggeration or underestimation, and such perception is important for him to encounter the enemy's plots, intrigues, and grudge against Islam and Muslims. It is a requisite of the *Da'iyah* who wishes to reform his people, to bring them back to the fold of Islam, and to convince them of its rituals and laws in order to apply them to their lives.

I know a great number of trustworthy Muslims who cannot speak about Islam in public, nor can they refute the doubts raised against it. They cannot argue with astray, biased, or perverse people, nor even display the merits and tolerance of Islam. The stories of the great Muslim figures of the past and their sacrifices, *jihad*, spirituality, and worship are absent from their minds.

This is far from exaggeration, but rather it is the stark reality in the world of the trustworthy. This book contains nothing fanciful, unreal, or exaggerated. Everything I have mentioned represents a bitter status quo that requires serious treatment. If these people are asked why they are so, they will answer, "We do not know, as we do not read". Thus, they are pleased with their inefficiency and some of them are proud of being so. They say, "We do not like reading and we are not about to". If such people do not read in order to learn and call people to the truth based on knowledge, who will?

If a trustworthy Muslim is culturally weak, and does not do his best to acquire knowledge, who will step forward to speak about Islam? Will disbelievers do it? Will its enemies who are ignorant of it do it? Will the weak and unqualified Muslims do it?

For this reason, the gate of inefficiency is wide open to such trustworthy people who are satisfied to lead an empty life, knowing little about their religion, *Shari'ah*, civilization, and culture. Ironically, they pretend that they are protecting Islam and calling for it!

Sheikh al-Qaradawi said, "There is an inefficiency when it comes to understanding the reality of life today. We suffer ignorance regarding others so that we waver between exaggeration and underestimation, although those others have uncovered everything about us. Until now, we are unaware of the points of strength and weakness in us. We often make a mountain out of a molehill and belittle a great thing, whether regarding our potentialities or our shortcomings."⁽¹⁾

Sheikh Sayyid Qutb (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "We should comprehend the culture and civilization of our modern age. We should practice this civilization by test and choice. This is because we do not know what to take or leave unless we control it with knowledge and trial. Out of knowledge and experience one acquires the power of choice."⁽²⁾

It should be known that a Muslim only has this divine source to acquire knowledge about creedal facts, general conception of existence, acts of worship, morals, manners, values, and criteria, principles and rules of the political, social, or economic systems, the interpretation of the incentives of human activity and the movement of human history. But still, one should study all of this from a Muslim whom he trusts regarding his religiosity, piety, and practical experience of his creed in real life.

A Muslim can learn pure sciences from Muslims and non-Muslims, including chemistry, physics, biology, astronomy, medicine, industry, agriculture, and management, from a purely technical and administrative aspect. This also includes ways of work and tactics of war from the technical side, and other similar activities. The Muslim society should provide required experts in all fields since it is a collective duty (*Fard*

1. `Ali Badahdah, *Muqawwimat Ad-Da`iyah An-Najih*, p. 65.

2. Sayyid Qutb, *Al-Mustaqbal Li Hadha Ad-Din*, p. 118.

Kifayah; if some performed it the rest are exempted from it, yet if no one performed it, all are responsible). Nevertheless, until this has been achieved, Muslim individuals have to learn about these fields and their applications from Muslim and non-Muslim scientists. As a matter of fact, these subjects are not connected to the formation of the Muslim's conception of life, the universe, man, the objective of his existence, the nature of his role, and his relation to the universe around him as well as to the Creator of the whole universe. Also, they are not connected to the principles, laws, systems, or positions that regulate man's life whether individually and collectively. Besides, they do not pertain to the morals, manners, conventions, traditions, values, and criteria which are widespread in his society and constitute the features of this society.⁽¹⁾ Hence, they do not involve any danger of creedal aberrance or religious recess (*Jahiliyyah*; return to the state of the pre-Islamic period).

He can study all that remains of pre-Islamic activity, not to formulate his vision and knowledge in all these affairs out of it, but to know how the *Jahiliyyah* deviates and how to amend and rectify these deviations by referring them to their true origins in the components of the Islamic conception and the facts of the Islamic creed.

The idea that culture is a "human heritage" that knows no country, class, or religion is true as long as it is pertinent to pure sciences and their applications without transcending this area to the bearings of these sciences or to the "metaphysical" philosophical interpretations⁽²⁾ of man's soul, activity, history, or even to art, literature, or all forms of sensory expression. However, this idea is one of the worldwide traps

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1. Sheikh Sayyid (may Allah have mercy on him) mentioned various aspects of Islamic culture in his speech.
 2. I.e. the unseen interpretations.

of the Zionists who are interested in liquefying all the barriers including the barriers of creed and perception so that they could penetrate the body of the whole world while it is relaxed and anaesthetized, and thus they will be able to practice their satanic activity."⁽¹⁾

7. Time wasting

Many books have been written with examples about the importance of time and how to make good use of it. Most of these books are useful, so there is no need to repeat their contents here. I only wish to clarify that one of the clearest aspects of inefficiency of a Muslim is wasting time and not employing it in what benefits him. "An hour for an effective man has its value. An hour that is thought to be useless can be employed by an effective man in something beneficial. Every man looks at time conventionally, but time for an effective man is very productive of the facts of life where every moment pulsates with vitality, and is not dead and trivial. That is why it will be hard for a man to be asked on the Day of Resurrection about his lifetime and how he spent it."⁽²⁾

Ibn `Uqayl al-Hanbali⁽³⁾ said, describing the importance of investing time usefully, "Surely it is not lawful for me to waste any hour of my lifetime. Even when I am not busy with studying or debating, I work my mind during my breaks while lying down."⁽⁴⁾

1. Sayyid Qutb, *Ma`alim Fi At-Tariq*, pp. 138-141.

2. Gawdat Sa`id, *Al-Insan Hina Yakunu Kalla Wa Hina Yakunu `Adla*, p. 9.

3. His full name is Abul-Wafa' `Ali ibn `Uqayl ibn Muhammad al-Baghdadi. He was a great Imam, scholar, theologian, and Sheikh of the Hanbalis and compiled useful books. He was born in 431 A.H. He was smart, knowledgeable, and virtuous but he was confused about some of the Mu`tazilah. He died in 513 A.H. See *Siyar A`lam An-Nubala`*.

4. `Abd al-Sattar Nuwayr, *Al-Waqt Huwa Al-Hayah*, p. 178.

A Westerner said, "Every successful man makes good use of the short spans of time that people usually neglect. He saves and utilizes the separate minutes and hours, occasional feasts, intervals, and the periods spent in waiting for persons who lack punctuality. He utilizes these periods to produce marvelous results that astonish those who have not realized this great secret."⁽¹⁾

The worst form of inefficiency is when a trustworthy Muslim wastes his time in trivial or minor things. Unfortunately, only when it is late does he realize that he wasted time and prepared little provision for the Hereafter.

8. Insignificance of objectives

A person's greatness is connected to the greatness of his objectives. The greater a man's objective is, the more it indicates that he is open-minded and that he loves noble matters. Whenever you know that a man has an insignificant objective, then be aware that he has deviated from the right way, is confused, and overwhelmed by Satan's plots.

By observing a number of the trustworthy Muslims today, one finds them distracted by insignificant objectives and less concerned about noble matters. There are many examples of this but I find it sufficient to refer to "dieting". This question has occupied an increasing number of trustworthy people. They plan for, ask and consult one another about it. They pursue it in newspapers and magazines, and it forms more than one tenth of what they read about even though it is not an important question pertaining to this life or to the Afterlife. Even when they gather together, they compete with one another in counting the calories in fruit, how much energy meat produces, the fat content of drinks, and so on.

1. Orison Mardin, *Sabiluka Ila Ash-Shuhrah Wa An-Najah*, p. 56.

Dieting has captivated their lives. I wish they could follow the Prophet's Sunnah, for it would be a form of worship, but they pay no attention to it. It seems as if they were punishing themselves by indulging in such hardships that Allah has not ordained. They persevere patiently as they diet to an extent unparalleled even by that in which they handle virtuous deeds that raise the person to the Gardens of Bliss.

In order to keep up their dieting, they refuse others people's entertainment when they are invited as guests. Rather, they may blame their host if he does not present something that suits their diet. Some of them do not break their fast on dates (as the Sunnah ordains) under the pretext that it is not appropriate for their dieting, while some others reject to drink from the water of Zamzam saying that "it satiates appetite in the way food does;"⁽¹⁾ that is to say, it contradicts the requirements of their dieting. Thus, they leave this blessed water for another. Have you ever seen anything more absurd than this!

The Prophet (peace be upon him) liked honey and sweets⁽²⁾. He also used to eat meat and would accept whatever was offered to him unless he detested it. Yet, those diet-stricken people leave blessed food for the sake of dieting. I think that Satan has led those people into his traps, where he diverted them from noble things to trivial matters. If they observed the instructions of their diet moderately and concentrated on matters that benefit them both in this worldly life and in the Hereafter, their behavior would then be balanced. Unfortunately, they put dieting on the top of their list of concerns and interests in life.

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1. This is part of a hadith reported by Imam Ahmad and it starts with: *"It is blessed and it gratifies the one who drinks from it as food gratifies him"*.
 2. This is part of a hadith reported by the six narrators on the authority of `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her).

There are many other examples of such people, but I guess this is sufficient to prove how some trustworthy Muslims occupy themselves with minor trivial matters.

A comparison between these people having insignificant purposes and a trustworthy Muslim having noble objectives is quite clear. The Kuwaiti doctor `Abd ar-Rahman as-Sumit (may Allah protect him) made it his life-long objective to save African Muslims from Christianization and to guide the idolatrous among them to Islam. Many trustworthy Muslims find themselves incapable of accomplishing this task. He set this goal nearly twenty years ago and we believe he is constantly working toward it. He has achieved such marvelous success in his work that history has recorded it. I do believe that this man is one of those who have completely changed the course of African history. He has disturbed the corruptive missionary societies because he constructed mosques, schools, hospitals, radio stations, and wells for which he will be rewarded, Allah willing.

Now, it is clear that when the objective of a trustworthy person is lofty, he performs wonderful things that seem to be impossible in the eyes of others. By the same token, if his objective is low, he lives on the margin of life and when he dies, people do not even perceive that he was living among them.

There are many trustworthy Muslims who are changing the course of history in Southern and Northern America, Europe, Australia, and Africa where they are working day and night. They have well planned great objectives which they have managed to achieve. Many of the negligent among the trustworthy watch them coldly and some of them fight against those who are active and stand in the way of their goals.

Hence, every trustworthy person should set for himself a noble goal and pursue it within his capacity until he reaches it by the virtue of Allah's guidance.

Try to think deeply how Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi (may Allah have mercy on him) was steadfast in fighting against the Crusaders. However, his goal was more supreme than achieving temporary victories or driving the Crusaders out of Syria. One of his companions said, "Once I was traveling with him (Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi) from Ashkelon to Acre. It was a stormy winter and the sea was choppy. I was not accustomed to the sea, and it was so terrible for me to sail that I imagined that even if was offered the treasures of the world in order to sail for only one mile, I would not have done so. I disapproved of those who sail to gain some money and sided with those who say that the testimony of a sea-traveler should not be accepted. All these thoughts crept into my mind because of the rough waves of the sea before me.

Then Salah ad-Din turned to me and said, 'When Almighty Allah permits that we conquer the rest of the coast, I will divide the land, make a bequest, say good-bye (to my people and companions), and then sail this sea towards their islands and chase them until I leave no disbeliever on earth'.

His words impressed me as they contradicted my thoughts, and I said to him, 'There is no one on earth who is more courageous or of a purer intention to support the religion of Allah than my lord.' I told him about my thoughts that had crossed my mind and then said, 'This is indeed a good intention, but my lord may send his soldiers instead. For because he is a source of protection for the Muslims, he should not take any risk by going himself'. He asked me, 'Tell me: what is the most honorable form of death?' I said, 'To die in the cause of Allah.' He added, 'I only want to be granted the most honorable form of death.'

Then he (the narrator) said, "Consider how pure his conscience was and how courageous his soul was!"⁽¹⁾

Dear readers, do you see the great objective that Salah ad-Din (may Allah have mercy on him) set for himself and how he sought to accomplish it? Now, do you not think that he who sets a similar objective for himself may become inefficient or feel exhausted before achieving it?

9. Breach of promise

This is repulsive if done by a trustworthy Muslim. He may promise to do something but does not accomplish it. It is worse if he promises to visit someone at a specific time but neither comes on time, nor apologizes, and - rather - comes late, presents unconvincing excuses that are not acceptable from a trustworthy person. People waste much time in waiting for others who do not respect their appointments nor keep their promises. Even when they come late they seem disinterested in what they have done.

This kind of behavior is the type associated with those who stop handling righteous work after starting it and fail to pursue noble tasks after promising to accomplish them. They do so because they lack understanding, and do not recognize the consequences of breaking promises deliberately or perceive the harm that their lateness causes; i.e. the psychological harm that waiting for a long time and futile expectation produces. They do not imagine the harm involved in wasting time that is indeed valuable and precious. Their continual unpunctuality and disregard of time may cause people to distrust and care less about them. Almighty Allah says,

1. Muhammad Al-Shareef, *Mukhtasar Ar-Rawdatayn*, p. 383.

﴿O you who believe! Why say you that which you do not? Grievously hateful is it in the sight of Allah that you say that which you do not.﴾

(As-Saff: 2-3)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"The sign(s) of (with which) a hypocrite (is recognized) are three: he lies if he talks, if he promises, he breaks his promise, and if he is given a trust, he betrays."⁽¹⁾

And here are some maxims along these lines:

"Breach of promise equals a third of hypocrisy."

"There is no goodness in a promise that is not kept or in an accomplishment that is not complemented."

"The pledge given by a wicked person is mere procrastination and justification."

"Do not promise to do what is beyond your capability."

"A beautiful reply is better than a prolonged promise."

"His promise is only a trick and a mirage in sandy deserts."

"He is just like lightning that is accompanied by no rain."

"A summery cloud is more productive than his words."

"A line on water lasts longer than his pledge."

10. Failing to control one's household

Many righteous trustworthy men are negligent when it comes to governing their wives. Thus wives control the house, and the husband

1. Reported by al-Bukhari.

loses the characteristic of being the protector and maintainer of his wife, and eventually the household falls apart. This mainly pertains to the husband's incapacity to put himself in the place that Allah has set for him. Allah (Glory be to Him) says,

﴿Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other...﴾

(An-Nisa': 34)

In his life with his wives, the Prophet (peace be upon him) put the principle of protection and maintenance into practice. He was never lenient with regard to *Shari`ah* limits or sound applications of concepts such as maintenance and justice. In other matters, he was considerate and tolerant. May the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him!

Lady `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) spoke of how the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to act in his house, saying, "He used to share his wives in the household chores, but when he heard the call for prayer, he would go out to perform it."⁽¹⁾ Nevertheless, he (peace be upon him) kept away from his wives for a whole month for a particular reason that he (peace be upon him) believed to have necessitated that.⁽²⁾

Once the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave his wives (may Allah be pleased with them all) the right to choose concerning their subsistence. He (peace be upon him) wanted to regulate it through the norms of prophethood, which entails a great deal of asceticism and austerity. Almighty Allah says,

1. Ahmad al-Banna, *Al-Fath Ar-Rabbani*, vol. 22, p. 153.

2. Muslim, *Sahih*.

﴿O Prophet! Say to your Consorts: 'If it be that you desire the life of this world, and its glitter,-then come! I will provide for your enjoyment and set you free in a handsome manner. But if you seek Allah and His Messenger, and the Home of the Hereafter, Verily Allah has prepared for the well-doers amongst you a great reward.﴾

(Al-Ahzab: 28-29)

Ibn Kathir⁽¹⁾ commented on these verses saying, "This is a command from Almighty Allah to His Messenger (peace be upon him) to make his wives choose between either of two alternatives: that he would separate from them so that they might have other husbands with whom they can enjoy the pleasures and allurements of this worldly life, or that they be patient through the difficulties they were suffering from in his company, in which case they would receive a great reward from Allah. They (may Allah be pleased with them all) chose Allah and His Messenger, and the Home of the Hereafter. So Allah gathered for them both the good of this life and happiness of the life to come." Then, he cited a number of hadiths in this regard with their chains of transmission up to the Prophet (peace be upon him).⁽²⁾

In the present time, there are distressing examples of some trustworthy men's inability to lead their wives. A pious trustworthy man may have a wife who is not committed to the instructions of Islam in many aspects. Another cannot enjoin the right or forbid the prohibited inside his house, and a third cannot perform the duty of *Da`wah* or leave his house unless his wife permits it. These examples

1. Isma'il ibn `Umar ibn Kathir al-Basri was a Hafizh and an Imam. He was born in 700 A.H. and raised in Damascus. He focused on Hadith and compiled several widespread books. He had a sharp memory and a sense of humor. He died in 774 A.H. See *Ad-Durar Al-Kaminah*.

2. See *Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-`Azim*.

are poignant, yet they do exist in the community of the trustworthy. They undoubtedly indicate absolute inefficiency and weakness.

Once I visited a righteous brother to invite him to accompany us on a blessed journey to Medina. He said he could not come with us and gave excuses for his refusal, which I accepted. Then I said to him that we were going to take our wives and children with us. Having heard this, the man became very happy, and said, 'Why did you not say that from the very beginning? I am coming with you.'

Fathi Yakan said, "Women play a very effective role in the life of *Da`iyahs* as well as in the life of all people. She is either a source of blessing or a source of misfortune. In the field of *Da`wah*, there are several examples of both cases. Some *Da`iyahs* proved to be good Muslims, their life continued uprightly after marriage and they became more productive. But for others, life deteriorated after marriage; they became ill-mannered and then completely deserted the path of *Da`wah*."⁽¹⁾

He also said, "Islam has warned husbands from going to excesses in answering the desires of their wives so as to maintain their personality and manhood. A man's house collapses once his personality dwindles within this house. This is because a man's personality plays an energetic role in the marital life. If a husband is not everything in his wife's life, if she does not find him an ideal for herself, and if he does not deal with her with both affection and firmness, the bond of marriage will surely be broken. In short, marriage is one of the most critical turning points in the life of a *Da`iyah*. It is really a great loss if he falls down in the first experience."⁽²⁾

1. Fathi Yakan, *Mushkilat Ad-Da`wah Wa Ad-Da`iyah*, p. 49.

2. *Ibid*, pp. 55-56.

CHAPTER FOUR

Causes of Inefficiency

There are many causes of the inefficiency that afflicts the trustworthy Muslim. Some are internal, i.e. related to the individual, while others are external. The external causes, however, are divided into two kinds:

First: The causes beyond his capabilities, that is to say that which he can do nothing about. Since Allah never burdens a person beyond his scope, man must be patient in dealing with such hardships. He must follow the example of the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) in Makkah when they were afflicted with poverty, oppression, and harm.

Second: The causes which he is able to handle and in which he can overcome his apathy and inefficiency. He may have, for example, a domineering or irreligious wife. In this case he should try to set her right or leave her. He may have a desire for something prohibited and he can overcome this through patience and piety, and he may be surrounded by luxury and means of comfort which he can avoid by leading a simple life.

On the other hand, the internal causes that produce deficiency are more difficult to handle and are usually complicated. One has to overcome them first in order to free himself from the captivity of his

own inefficiency. This requires long and continuous reformation of intractable ills and frivolities. However, resorting to Almighty Allah, fleeing to Him, and praying to Him along with adopting the means to treat the causes will guarantee the reduction of the effects of these ills and frivolities.

Here are some internal causes:⁽¹⁾

a. False humility:

It means the constant air of humility within which a man wraps his personality. You always find such a person making the excuse that he is weak and cannot bear the responsibility, or that he is beneath what is expected of him, and that people overestimate his capabilities.⁽²⁾ Does this person not know that what he considers to be little is for others considered to be plenty? Does he not realize that his opinion of himself is totally different from the actual potentialities that Allah granted him in order to benefit all Muslims?

What is really amazing is that this excessively humble introvert sees people listening to and being lead by those who are below him in knowledge and understanding and yet he remains hesitant and negligent.

What is really critical about this repulsive disposition is that the one who is characterized by it may get used to magnifying things even if they are simple - and belittling his own potentialities. This will eventually lead him to total inefficiency. The only cure for this person is to obtain unswerving determination to change this disposition that contradicts intrepidity, courage, inclination towards noble values, and other qualities that are required of the Muslim.

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1. Unlike the external causes, which many people have dealt with, I have mentioned the internal causes in details because they are not widely tackled. (Author)
 2. For more details about this point see my book *At-Tanazu' Wa At-Tawazun Fi Hayat al-Muslim*. (Author).

b. Delicate and sensitive feelings:

The sensitive person of sound feelings and upright vision is the one that is actually needed. However, if one is overcome by his emotions and turns out to be overly sensitive, this will deprive him of his strength and peculiarity. It will be very difficult for others to talk freely with him because such a person burdens words with unintended meanings which may have never crossed the mind of the speaker. This person becomes fragile and susceptible to the surrounding events to the extent that even his close fellows dislike his personality.

Such a quality and attitude will lead this person to total inefficiency simply because he cannot deal or mix with people in a satisfactory way. People will not like to be with him when he behaves in this way. He will eventually become isolated and unable to participate in *Da`wah*. I knew men who used to behave in the way I just mentioned and they are now almost living in isolation just because they were overcome by their emotions and focused on trivial issues that most people ignore.

Curing such people is extremely difficult, and unless Allah supports them with His Aid, they will never recover from this disease of the heart. The difficulty here is that this disposition has grown with them since they were young so that it has become engraved in their personalities. People of this kind may even need to go to a doctor that is skilled in handling psychological problems in order to get rid of at least some of the symptoms.

c. Indolence:

Indolence is an ingrained quality in many people that drives them to slacken in performing virtuous deeds and encourages them to be content with meanness in everything. This quality most probably

emerges from luxury and relaxation, fondness of the worldly life, and neglecting anything that may contradict or spoil such joys.

It also leads to inefficiency as it prevents a man from leaving his house and district to carry out the duty of *Da`wah*, or to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. It even prevents him from frequenting the mosque or seeking knowledge. Moreover, it may prevent him from watching over his children. In this way, such a man will eventually be entirely inefficient; may Allah protect us from such a state!

Indolence is thus the enemy of success. It is a fatal epidemic that ruins whoever it befalls and makes him unable to bear his private duties as a human being or build up his future as an independent person. It also makes him a constantly defeated person before the challenges of life. That is why Islam considers indolence a repulsive quality and Almighty Allah dispraised the indolent in His Ever-Glorious Book: ﴿...that they come not to prayer save lazily.﴾ (At-Tawbah: 54)

Besides, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to seek the protection of Allah against laziness. On the authority of *Anas* (may Allah be pleased with him) who said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say, "*O Allah, I seek Your protection against anxiety and grief, incapacity and laziness, and cowardice, and stinginess.*"⁽¹⁾

`Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) also said, "Sloth is a key to misery, and it is through incapacity and laziness that poverty emerges. He who does not seek does not find and would fall in corruption."

And here are some maxims:

"Activity is a blessing, sloth is destruction, and indolence is an evil omen."⁽²⁾

1. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*.

2. `Abdullah Al-Yusuf, *Ash-Shakhsiyyah An-Najihah*, pp. 62.

"Beware of favoring ease and luxury and leaning towards comfort and relief, because the consequences of them are hateful and detrimental ... and let go of boredom, indolence, and love of this worldly life for these are the manners of the beasts ... "(1)

Sheikh Zakariyya al-Ansari⁽²⁾ (may Allah have mercy on him) used to perform voluntary prayers standing, although he was a hundred years old or more. He would unwillingly sway to the right and to the left due to his senility and sickness. Someone advised him not to overburden himself but he replied, "O my son, the soul always inclines towards indolence and I fear that it may defeat me and make me die indolent".⁽³⁾

Indolence must also be treated so as not to lead to indifference, which is a disease that strikes the active *Da`iyahs*. At worst it leads to abstention after continuation and at best it leads to inactivity, indolence, delay, and flagging after activity. Languor is an incidental state that one must not give in to it. Thus, if the *Da`iyah* feels that he must stop for a while, he can do so but let this while be like the short break for the fighter who later returns to giving and striving. `Abdullah ibn `Amr (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *"Every task has (its share of) activity and every activity has (its share of) cessation. He who spends his (period of) cessation in following my Sunnah will succeed, and he who spends it in anything else will be ruined."*⁽⁴⁾

1. Abu Hayyan at-Tawhidi, *Al-Basa'ir Wa Adh-Dhakha'ir*, vol, 2, p. 7.

2. Zakariyya ibn Muhammad al-Ansari was one of the scholars of the tenth century. He had great skills in classification and he was appointed as a judge in Egypt where he died in 926 A.H. See *Al-Kawakib As-Sa'irah*.

3. *Ibid*.

4. Al-Mundhiri said the hadith was reported by Ibn Abi `Asim and Ibn Hibban.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "Experiencing periods of cessation is something inevitable for those who pursue the path of *Da`wah*. So he who spends this period trying to get closer to Allah by acting righteously and is not tempted into giving up an obligation or committing a prohibited act, is expected to return better than he was, although Allah (Exalted and Glorified be He) loves the kind of worship that His servant pursues steadily."⁽¹⁾

d. Boredom and weariness:

Almighty Allah set certain norms for running the Universe and bringing it to perfection. These norms dictate that the corruption resulting from people's long commitment of and familiarity with abominations can only be removed through gradual reformation. Such reformation may take generations to bear fruits and it may take years in one generation. This is clear for the one who reviews Islamic history or the history of the Prophets and the reformers since Adam (peace be upon him).

Those who carry out the task of reformation must be sure about this norm, and must be prepared to sacrifice their precious time and effort throughout very long and successive years, for it may take them thirty or forty years to put a considerable number of people on the Right Path.

However, if some of the reformers think that they can take a shortcut by reducing the number of years required, then they do not understand the nature of this norm, and their attempt will be an unprecedented and unwarranted innovation. And if these reformers came to realize the impracticability of their attitude, they will desperately give up reformation because of tiredness and boredom.

1. Jasim Al-Yasin, *Al-Futur*, p. 15.

They will fall into inefficiency and frustration and will themselves be a source of such ignominious traits.

This certainly contradicts the attitude of the noble Prophets who made tremendous efforts for long periods of time without becoming bored or tired. The best example here is that of Prophet Nuh (peace be upon him) .For one thousand years save fifty this great Prophet exerted his noble, sincere, and devoted efforts to guide his people to the right path. He did not seek any personal gain or profit and he suffered much for the sake of this aim. He endured his people's renunciation, arrogance, and mockery. During those years he witnessed little positive response and an increasing number of those following evil. He never became bored, indifferent, or desperate, and with great patience and steadfast persistence he tried to convey the Message to his people's ears, hearts, and minds through various ways and means.

In addition, boredom that leads to inefficiency can rise in the soul of the person who is always moody, weary, and unstable and who cannot keep to one state for a long period. It can emerge in a person who does only what he wants and leaves what he does not want. It can also be engendered through disappointment because one can work hard to achieve a post or target, but if he fails, he becomes bored and stops working.

e. Gloominess and lack of patience:

Reformers must be patient, open-hearted, and tolerant. They must be involved with people and mix with them within the permitted limits in order to make people feel that they are always close to them. However, if reformers become tough, gloomy, impatient with people, distance themselves from others, and prefer the kind of isolation that is

neither beneficial nor lawful, they will be unable to reform the society or to affect it in a positive way. They will go on living in seclusion unless people are in dire need of them in the same way that people in the past needed al-A`mash⁽¹⁾ (may Allah have mercy on him).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *"The believer can get along with people and people can get along with him. There is no goodness in the one who cannot get along with people and whom people cannot get along with."*⁽²⁾

Also, ash-Shafi`i said to his student, "Isolation from people creates enmity, and mixing with them in an exaggerated manner brings bad companions, so try to be between the two [states]."⁽³⁾

f. Despair:

Despair is the opposite of vitality. It is like an early death because the desperate person is the one who leads a dark life before going to a dark grave. This so-called living person is actually counted among the dead simply because hope has died in his heart, mind, and soul long before his organs die. So the dead person - besides the one whose soul has left his body - may be the desperate one, the disbeliever, or the aberrant whose life resembles death in many ways. May Allah save us!

Thus, the desperate person is definitely incapacitated, for he cannot do anything or pursue the right course himself. This is not because he is bridled or oppressed, but because he has imprisoned himself by the thought that reformation is useless, that people are deprived of goodness, and that not much can be expected from them.

1. Sulayman ibn Mahran was an Imam and Hafizh. He was one of the tough people in the narration who were impatient with people and who preferred seclusion. See *Siyar A`lam An-Nubala`*.

2. Al-Haythami said it was narrated by Ahmad and at-Tabarani.

3. Muhammad Al-Sharceef, *Nuzhat Al-Fudala`*, vol. 2, p. 741.

The Prophets (peace be upon them all) never gave up. They called upon people to worship Almighty Allah with great diligence and determination for long years and sometimes for centuries like Prophet Nuh (peace be upon him). However, the outcome of their tremendous efforts could have at times been very disappointing as Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "*A Prophet would come with (only) one man with him, and a Prophet would come with two men, and a Prophet would come with nobody with him.*"⁽¹⁾ Almighty Allah says about Nuh, who had persistently invited his people to worship Allah for nearly a millennium: ﴿...but only a few believed with him.﴾ (Hud: 40)

Among the psychological influence that the *Da'iyahs* recognize and face in life is the daunting individualistic attitude. This can cause them to slacken in carrying out the responsibility of *Da'wah* and it hinders them from performing *jihad*. This kind of influence drives them to live in seclusion from society and to lean towards relaxation and introversion. If this phenomenon spreads and becomes deeply rooted in the mentalities of the *Da'iyahs*, it will be the final straw that causes the Islamic work to collapse. It would kill any hope of establishing Islamic dignity and would turn the desire to restore the glories of the past into a mere dream.

g. Fear:

Fear is a destructive malady and when it befalls the trustworthy person, it causes him to lose his strength and determination and it may also deprive him of the trait "trustworthy". The trustworthy person must trust in Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) in all his affairs, and know that this is a condition for being trustworthy. On the other hand, the person who is always worried about himself, his property,

1. Reported by al-Bukhari.

children, and career, and who is always anxious about his future cannot be a person truly having confidence in Allah. This kind of person will live in constant fear and apprehension, which will then become an obsession. He will live in the hell of anxiety and will end up in complete and permanent inefficiency and apathy.

You cannot find among the trustworthy Muslims past and present, who dedicated themselves to carry out the task of reformation and change, anyone who experienced that kind of fear that leads to languor and deficiency. They may be afflicted with devilish insinuation but it can be overcome by their strong trust and faith in Allah. Almighty Allah says,

﴿We said, 'Fear not! For you have indeed the upper hand.'﴾

(Taha: 68)

This fear intensifies during ordeals and catastrophes, but it is Allah's Will that He tries the believers and prepares them to enter Paradise while being worthy of it. They must defend their belief and endure any agony, pain, suffering, or harm for its sake, whether in victory or in defeat. Once they are steadfast in their belief, they will neither be shaken by hardship, or fear, nor will they avoid ordeals and afflictions. They will be worthy of Paradise because their souls will then be liberated from fear and humiliation, the love of this worldly life, and the tendency towards ease and relaxation. Their lives on earth will have something of heaven that is very far from all that is mundane. In this regard the Almighty says,

﴿Or do you think that you shall enter the Garden (of Bliss) without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They encountered suffering and adversity, and were so shaken in spirit that even the Messenger and those of faith who

were with him cried: 'When (will come) the help of Allah' Ah! Verily, the help of Allah is (always) near! ﴿

(Al-Baqarah: 214)

h. Vagueness:

When a person has the habit of being vague, he is no longer aware of his needs or aims. No one is able to know the way such a person lives or the way he thinks. Vagueness may, for example, be the result of some psychological condition that made him prefer isolation and gloominess. It may also be the result of some external cause like for example how he looks, a physical condition, a way of dressing that is different to his society, or it may be the result of all these causes put together.

Vagueness will no doubt lead him to inefficiency simply because people will avoid mixing with him and will deal with him with a mixture of fear and caution. So the one who is afflicted with this quality must hasten to be rid of it as much as possible so that he may resume his life with others in a way that makes it possible for him to carry out the work of reformation.

i. Hesitation:

Hesitation is among the causes that lead to inefficiency because the hesitant person seldom feels determined to do anything and even if he is determined, he rarely puts his determination into practice. He continuously stalls in the face of consecutive opportunities that appear before him and misses new opportunities because he is preoccupied with lamenting over the lost ones. In this way he spends his whole life unable to attain loftiness or sublimity. Hesitation may be the result of weak trust in Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He), neglecting the

Istikhara prayer, and refraining from consulting intellectual, religious, and trustworthy persons.

These nine causes of inefficiency have dangerous and fatal effects upon man's personality and destructive effects upon his efforts and hopes. If Allah does not support him with His Mercy and Grace, he will remain captive in the prison of his own inefficiency until the end of his life.

Thus, the one who is afflicted with such a quality must hasten to cure it in the same way that he hastens to cure his body from any physical malady. He must seek treatment in the hope that he may be a useful member of his *Ummah*, if Allah blesses him with recovery.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Remedy of Inefficiency

It is important to note that inefficiency is not just a malady, but it is one of the most fatal maladies of all. It can only be cured by praying to Almighty Allah in submissiveness and humility in the hope that He may cure His weak servant from this affliction. The inefficient person must then take the necessary practical steps according to this kind of his deficiency, as it may affect his faith, knowledge, mentality, or all of them. Here are some points that may help in overcoming inefficiency in general, after which I shall mention some specific indications of inefficiency and the ways to cure them. I am careful to mention the practical steps because I know that people are tired of theoretical suggestions and dry preaching.

1. The constant reading of biographies

Books of this kind examine the lives of famous persons whose influence on their societies transcended the limits of time and place. Reading this kind of material is a tried antidote for Inefficiency. Reading the biographies of the great, especially the biographies of the early righteous predecessors who had offered the greatest examples in sacrifice, worship, asceticism, *jihad*, and benevolence, has helped many people to change and overcome inefficiency, as it filled them with enthusiasm, and encouraged them to imitate these great people.

The following three incidents clarify this point:

Ibn al-Qasim⁽¹⁾ (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "I used to go to Malik before dawn to ask him about a few matters. He was always tolerant and patient with me and so I went there everyday at early dawn. One day I fell asleep on his doorstep and he went to the mosque while I was not aware of him going out. A black maid who worked for him then kicked me - thinking that he was Malik's slave - and said, 'Your master does not fall asleep like you. For forty-nine years, he has performed the *Fajr* prayer with the ablution of the *'Isha'* prayer'. "⁽²⁾

This shows that for almost half of a century Malik (may Allah have mercy on him) had never broken his ablution in the period between evening and dawn, including the long wintry nights. Thus Malik was satisfied with eating and drinking a little all day long so that he might preserve his ablution.

One of the righteous predecessors said, "One night I woke up early before dawn to take my turn in reading the Qur'an to Ibn al-Akhram.⁽³⁾ However, I found myself preceded by thirty others and my turn came just before the *'Asr* prayer."⁽⁴⁾

Do you know that this person waited all that time to read almost two pages? See how patient he was as he waited from early dawn till the afternoon to read two pages, and what is even more amazing is

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1. Abu 'Abdullah ibn al-Qasim ibn Khalid, the Mawla of Zayd ibn al-Harith, was originally from Palestine, but he lived in Egypt. He was greatly praised by the virtuous as one of the great scholars of fiqh in Egypt. He died in Egypt in 191 A.H. May Allah have mercy on him! See *Tartib Al-Madarik*.
 2. Al-Qadi 'Ayyad, *Tartib Al-Madarik*, vol. 3, p. 250.
 3. Abu al-Hasan Muhammad ad-Dimishqi was a famous reciter of the Qur'an in Damascus. He died in 341 A.H. at eighty-one years of age. See *Siyar A'lam An-Nubala'*.
 4. Muhammad Al-Shareef, *Nuzhat Al-Fudala'*, vol. 2, p. 1145.

that when he went to this Sheikh's house, he found thirty other people waiting. When did all of them come and how could the Sheikh be patient enough to teach them all? How great those people were!

Imam `Isa ibn Musa al-Hashimi (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "I spent thirty years with an appetite for eating sweet things from the market with the common people but I could not because I had to rise early to listen to the hadiths".

Have you ever heard of a man in our time overcoming his appetite for food for thirty years? I doubt it, for today if we overcome such an appetite for thirty days, we think that we have achieved something great. What a real pity!

On reading these examples man's heart comes alive and he feels ashamed. It encourages him to get rid of his apathy and inefficiency that has increased over the long years of his life.

Imam Ibn al-Jawzi⁽¹⁾ (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "I seek the protection of Allah from those with whom we mix and from the way they live. One cannot see among them an ambitious person who can be a model for the beginner, or a pious companion who can be of benefit for the ascetic. You must observe the course of people's lives, read their works, and read what was written about them because reading their books makes you familiar with them. And if I said I had read twenty thousand volumes, it would have been more ... Thus, I benefited much by learning about the course of people's lives, along with their ambitions, assiduity, worship, and their peculiar knowledge

1. He is the Sheikh, Imam, famous scholar, Hafizh, and interpreter of the Qur'an Abu al-Faraj ibn Muhammad. He was born in Baghdad in 510 A.H. and listened to many Sheikhs. He was the best in reminding and preaching, wrote many books, and left many wise sayings. He died in Baghdad in 597 A.H. See *Siyar A`lam An-Nubala`*.

which can only be known by the one who reads about them. I came to despise the state of the people and to find the resolution of most students insignificant. Praise be to Allah."⁽¹⁾

Someone may ask: Are there any contemporary examples of people who overcame obstacles similar to ours, and who rose above the circumstances of societies similar to our societies? The reply here is that Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) has put in every era and country good and ideal persons through whom He shows mercy to people and strengthens them. However, I have mentioned here some examples of the righteous predecessors because of their great patience and perseverance.

In the fourteenth century there were people who dedicated themselves to serving Islam. They set the greatest examples in sacrifice, resolution, and in the performance of righteous deeds. Thus, it is worthy of the trustworthy *Da'iyahs* of our time to refer to the example of those ideals in order to learn from them how to rise above the people of their age and change the course of history.⁽²⁾

2. Visiting energetic righteous people

If man sees his peer better than him in worship, asceticism, *jihad*, or erudition, he will most probably be influenced by him because this is the nature of the human soul. The best thing to do is to visit such people for they will give you the chance to inherit their ascetic qualities, worship, and *jihad*. That is why the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were the best generation on earth, simply because they accompanied the best Messenger ever sent to humanity.

1. `Abd al-Fattah Abu Ghuddah, *Qimat Az-Zaman `Inda Al-`Ulama'*, p. 31.

2. See, for example, Fathi Yakan, *Al-Mawsu'ah Al-Harakiyyah*.

Imam ash-Shatibi⁽¹⁾ said, "Modeling after great people is an inevitable inherent quality in man, especially when this is incorporated by habituation and repetition."⁽²⁾ One of the righteous predecessors said, "If my heart once turned harsh, I would look at the face of Muhammad ibn Wasi',⁽³⁾ for he looked like a woman bereaved of a child."⁽⁴⁾ While Ibn al-Mubarak said, "If I looked at al-Fudayl,⁽⁵⁾ my grief would be renewed and I would hate myself," and then he cried.

Those people who were just quoted are from the most distinguished righteous predecessors. Thus, there is no doubt that visiting such people would leave a great impression on the heart. Nowadays, however, we do not know people similar to them or even close to them, but one must visit whoever he thinks will be of spiritual benefit to him.

3. Understanding man's mission in this worldly life

Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) created man and brought him into existence for a great point of wisdom that He clarifies in the verse that reads,

﴿And I created not the jinn and humans except they should worship Me (Alone).﴾

(Adh-Dhariyat: 56)

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1. The great Imam Ibrahim ibn Musa al-Ghirmati, known as Ash-Shatibi, was one of the Imams of the Malikis and wrote a number of books. He died in 790 A.H. May Allah have mercy on him! See *Al-A'lam*.
 2. `Ali Badahdah, *Muqwwimat Ad-Da'iyah An-Najih*. p. 27.
 3. Abu Bakr al-Azdi was a godly Imam, ascetic, and one of the famous *Tabi'un*. He died in 123 A.H. May Allah have mercy on him! See *Siyar A'lam An-Nubala'*.
 4. Muhammad Al-Shareef, *Nuzhat Al-Fudala'*, vol. 1, p. 526.
 5. Al-Fudayl ibn `Ayyad ibn Mas`ud was an Imam and given the title 'Sheikh of Islam'. He died in 186 A.H. See *Siyar A'lam An-Nubala'*.

Hence, man's mission on earth is to worship Allah (Exalted and Glorified be He) and to call other human beings to worship Him. Thus, because this is his mission in life, neglecting it and failing to establish it in people's lives, is a great loss and a glaring offence.

Interpreting this verse, Sayyid Qutb (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "This small verse signifies a huge, tremendous universal fact, which if man does not realize and become certain of, the life of mankind will never take its normal course, be it the life of the individual, the group, or humanity at large in all its stages and eras. It tackles the various aspects of the meanings and purposes that come under this fact, which is considered to be the cornerstone upon which life is built. The first aspect in this fact is that the existence of the jinns and human beings has a specific purpose and task that must be carried out. So whoever carries out this task fulfills the purpose of his existence, and whoever neglects carrying it out goes against the purpose of his existence. The one who neglects and falls short of achieving it will become idle and lead a meaningless life devoid of its original essence. He will detach himself from the law that brings him into existence and will consequently end up lost because he deviated from the law of existence that ties him, preserves him, and guarantees his survival. This specific role that ties the jinn and human beings to the law of existence is the worship of Allah. It lies in the fact that there should be a servant and a Lord: a servant who worships and a Lord who is worshipped. This is the basic standpoint upon which the servant's whole life must be built. Hence, the other aspect of this fact becomes clear, for it is now obvious that the significance of worship must not be restricted to the mere performance of the religious rituals, as Allah does not assign the jinn and human beings to spend their whole life performing rituals. On the contrary, He assigns other kinds of activities to them that consume the major parts of their lives. We

may not know the kind of activities that jinn are charged with, but we know the bounds of what is required of man. Almighty Allah says,

﴿And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels: Verily, I am going to place (mankind) a vicegerent on earth.﴾

(Al-Baqarah: 30)

It is thus man's role to be the vicegerent of Allah on earth. This role requires various vital activities including populating the earth and discovering its energies, provisions, treasures, and potentialities. Not only this, but man must also use such resources and develop them according to Allah's command. Being the vicegerent of Allah on earth also requires applying Allah's Law on earth to fulfill the Divine system that works in harmony with the universal general law.

At this point man will live on earth feeling that he is there to fulfill a certain role that was assigned to him by Allah, the Almighty. He will realize that his existence is to carry out this important task for a certain period of time out of his obedience to Allah. He will do so seeking the reward for his obedience, which is a peaceful feeling of tranquility, inner contentment with his status and his work and, above all, Allah's pleasure. Then in the Afterlife it will be an honor for him, a blessing, and a great bounty.

In this way, man will flee to Allah and escape from the impeding worldly vanities, charms, and temptations. He will be liberated from all worldly burdens and will be devoted to worshipping Allah sincerely. In this way, man settles in his original position in the Universe as a servant of Allah created to worship Him. He has succeeded in carrying out what he has been created for and in this way he fulfills the purpose behind his existence. He knows that worshipping Allah means to be His vicegerent on earth and this decrees that he must fulfill the requirements and assignments of this

responsibility to his utmost. At the same time, however, he must attach less importance to all worldly pleasures and temptations knowing that he is not carrying out this mission for any personal gain or pleasure. He does so only to fulfill the meaning of worship and servitude, after which he must flee to Allah.

Man must also realize that the value of deeds depends upon the purposes behind performing them and not upon their results. So let the results be whatever they will be because man is not responsible for them. He is only responsible for worship by carrying out these deeds. Thus, his reward does not depend upon the results; rather it depends upon the worship he performs.

This will make man change the way he regards such duties, assignments, and activities. He will start to perceive the meaning of worship that lies within all these things and so whenever he fulfills his duties, he will have completed his task and achieved his mission, regardless of the results. He will realize that such results are not part of his duty. He has nothing to do with them because they are controlled by Divine Destiny and the Almighty's Will, and he himself, his efforts, his intention, and his work are part of it.

His heart will be purified from any traces of greed when he stops thinking about his efforts and the results of his work; when he accepts his lot, and guarantees his reward as he fulfills the meaning of worship that motivates his worship and hard work. He will no longer be greedy for worldly vanities as he exerts himself in undertaking his responsibility on earth and in carrying out the assignments of his life's destiny. On the other hand, he denounces clinging to this life and the fruits of his activity. He knows quite well that such fruits are meant to fulfill the meaning of worship and are not meant to ensure any personal gain.

This worshipping servant then enjoys peace of mind and inner tranquility, whether he witnesses the fruit of his work or not and whether or not the results are up to his expectations. As far as he is concerned, he will have finished his job and guaranteed the reward once he fulfills the meaning of worship, and thus he will feel relieved. Whatever happens afterwards is out of his hands and is not his concern. He has learnt that he is a servant and so he no longer exceeds, in feelings or in requirements, the proper bounds of the servant. He has also learnt that Allah is the Lord and so he no longer interferes with Divine affairs. His emotions have become stable at this point, Allah is pleased with him and he is pleased with the destiny Allah assigned for him.

Thus, various aspects of this tremendous fact become manifest, confirmed by this one short verse, ﴿And I created not the jinn and humans except they should worship Me (Alone).﴾ (Adh-Dhariyat: 56) It is capable of changing life as a whole when its meaning is firmly established in the heart."⁽¹⁾

Sayyid Qutb also talked about the greatness of Islam and how the trustworthy people must preach it and make it's circulation their target, as he said: "The believer is superior, both in reference and source. So what is the value of the whole earth to him? What is the value of people to him? What do the common values and concepts mean to him? What do all these things represent to him when he is the kind of person who receives from Allah, resorts to Allah, and follows His Decree?

He is superior in understanding and in visualizing the truth of existence. He is superior in figuring out the values and standards with

1. Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Zhilal Al-Qur'an*, vol. 6, p. 3387.

which life, events, things, and persons are assessed. He is superior in conscience, feelings, manners, and behavior. He is superior in *Shari`ah* and order. He will look at aberrant humanity with sympathy and will pity them for their misery and wretchedness ..." ⁽¹⁾

If this is the state of the believer, then what is his target?

"He looks on them from a superior position with a feeling of pride and dignity. He also looks on them with mercy and commiseration. He wants to guide them to the goodness he has and raise them to the horizon in which he lives. The believer looks down upon widespread falsehood and upon the deceived masses feeling no weakness or grief; rather he insists on the right he has and adheres firmly to the course he pursues. His desire to guide those who are astray and deceived never weakens. It is just the strenuousness of the effort, the trouble, the strife, and the martyrdom ... " ⁽²⁾

Just as Sayyid Qutb (may Allah have mercy on him) clarified man's mission in calling people to worship Allah, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (may Allah have mercy on him) clarified man's mission in disciplining himself, and improving his work and his worship. One of his companions once asked him, "What sort of morning do you have?" Imam Ahmad replied, "It is a morning of someone whose Lord commands him to perform the obligations, whose Prophet commands him to perform the Sunnah, and to whom the two angels ask to rectify his work, his soul asks to follow his desires, Satan wants (him) to commit indecency, the angel of death is waiting to take his soul, and (whom his) children ask (him) for expenses!" ⁽³⁾

1. Sayyid Qutb, *Ma`alim Fi At-Tariq*, pp. 180-182.

2. *Ibid*, pp. 184-186.

3. Muhammad Al-Shareef, *Nuzhat Al-Fudala'*, vol. 2, p. 930.

4. Determination and persistence in overcoming inefficiency

If one does not have determination and persistence in overcoming his apathy and inefficiency, he will never make any progress. It was said, "No one ever indulged in comfort without being humiliated. The love of leisure brings about subservience. Satisfaction with one's state without any desire to achieve progress is a key to inefficiency."⁽¹⁾

The one who possesses a strong will and firm determination to overcome his inefficiency will - if Almighty Allah permits - succeed and overstep this tough and difficult psychological pitfall, for determination is an internal power that pushes one to accomplish what he thinks to be unachievable.

One must be trained to know how to materialize this determination. "The soul needs continuous exercise and constant training. It needs to be trained to be courageous, serious, and to do work hard, think, contemplate, search, and consider carefully, and decide and act upon what is decided. No matter how weak and hesitant your will is, training will strengthen it. It will impose itself on you so that you may impose yourself on life and then on living afterwards."⁽²⁾

"Be confident that you possess many large reservoirs containing the ability, energy, and talent that can qualify you as a great person and as an eternal figure in history."⁽³⁾

During the month of Ramadan one must observe how people multiply their efforts in prayer, reciting the Qur'an, and performing

1. Ar-Raghib Al-Asfahani, *Muhadarat Al-Udaba'*, vol 1, p. 448.

2. `Abdullah Al-Yusuf, *Ash-Shakhsiyyah An-Najihah*, p. 42.

3. *Ibid.*

righteous deeds. He must look at students and how they work hard at exam time. He must look at employees and see how they work in tight schedules, and at doctors and emergency workers and how they work during times of disaster and emergency. Man must look at all these kinds of people to realize that he too possesses inexhaustible reserves of great potentialities that Almighty Allah has granted him. In this way, man will come to realize that his feeling of inefficiency is only an illusion. Knowing this makes us realize that man possesses treasures of never-ending abilities. And what is needed is that man should be aware of them so that he may comprehend and utilize them.

5. Having a supreme objective and constantly trying to achieve it

The more supreme one's objective is, the more he should double his efforts to attain it. That is why it is observed that when a person becomes inefficient, it is because there is no objective, or if there is, it is trivial, whereas great, successful people have great objectives. These might have succeeded at one time and failed at another, but their success was significant when they succeeded.

So the inefficient person, in order to overcome his inefficiency, must set a worthy goal and work hard to achieve it. The endeavor in itself will be considered a victory over inefficiency.

"Fulfilling your aim needs uncompromising determination, firm will, self confidence, psychological strength, and moral courage, for you will certainly face a stream of discouragement, skepticism, and offenses which will all be aimed at underestimating your state and position. However, being psychologically immune will make these things harmless. Thus, you must get ready to confront the obstacles in

order to fulfill your aim. You must also be sure that the massive rock will eventually crumble under continuous bashing."⁽¹⁾

Seeking to reach a supreme objective will guarantee you, if Almighty Allah permits, three things:

1. A great rank in the Afterlife
2. Firmness on the right path
3. A good reputation after your death

This encourages the righteous to pray for you. Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) said, as the Qur'an states, ﴿Grant me honorable mention on the tongue of truth among the latest (generations)﴾ (Ash-Shu'ara': 84)

Furthermore, if your objective is fulfilled and proven to be worthy and supreme, then you will attain a great victory. After discussing a remedy for apathy and inefficiency I shall mention some ways to overcome some of its kinds which I hope will be realistic and practical.

1. Inefficiency in belief

Inner belief has its ups and downs. It increases with obedience and decreases with disobedience. Many of the trustworthy complain that their belief is continuously decreasing. They complain that they do not know how to reach high levels in the various aspects of belief, even though they read about the lives of the righteous predecessors and how they were filled with belief and certitude. They are continuously frustrated because of the wide gap they feel between themselves and the predecessors they read about, and they wonder how to bridge that gap.

1. `Abdullah Al-Yusuf, *Ash-Shakhsiyyah An-Najihah*, p. 71.

I believe, and Allah knows best, that the best solution in such matters is to introduce practical methods of treatment, i.e. methods that can be applied at the present time. That is why I shall mention some methods based upon the experiences of those who are distinguished and great in their belief. These methods are, at the same time, applicable in our era despite all their complications. But before mentioning them, the following points must be taken into consideration.

"Examples (of persons) equivalent to those of the righteous predecessors exist, but are few. We must be sure that this is Allah's Will. We must also be sure that we are predestined to be lesser than the righteous predecessors in enjoying the beauty of Islam. The benevolence of generations is on a continuous decrease and Fate has made it impossible for the latter to compete with the former. However, we must try the best we can without losing hope that some of us may acquire the noble qualities that were acquired by the righteous predecessors."⁽¹⁾

"We are now living in a period of social and political degeneration and deterioration. The present generation of Muslims is living in a period of intensive degeneration. Now that leisure time has increased, enthusiasm fades away. This lends us to make excuses for our present generation for its inability to excel, and its inferiority when compared to the righteous predecessors. So we should not indulge in charging ourselves with various kinds of weakness and should be sure that we - by virtue of Allah's Grace - contain abundant good."⁽²⁾

1. Muhammad Ahmad Ar-Rashid, *Al-'Awa'iq*, p. 305.

2. *Ibid*, p. 309.

Below are some practical methods for curing inefficiency in belief:

a. Maintaining the performance of obligatory rituals:

Somebody may say: What does this have to do with our topic? The performance of obligatory deeds is a priority of the trustworthy.

By the performance of obligatory rituals I mean performing them in the same way that was mentioned in the hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or in the nearest way to that mentioned in these hadiths. For example, when it comes to prayer, we must try at first to perform it in the proper way instead of lamenting upon missing the Sunnah prayers.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"If people were to realize what is in (i.e. the value or the reward of) the call (to prayer) and the first row (in congregational prayer) and they were to find nothing but to draw lots on them, they would do so."⁽¹⁾

Thus, when the Muslim hears the call to prayer, he must hasten to secure a place in the first row and catch up with the Sunnah and the first *Takbir* in prayer (*Takbirat Al-Ihram*). Many of the trustworthy do not do this. They complain of their weakness in performing voluntary acts, especially prayer during the night. This is, however, the natural consequence of someone who does not care about being in the first row and starting the prayer on time, for the one who is weak in this regard will be even weaker in other things.

This is the case with prayer in general, but there are certain prayers that one is highly recommended to maintain. The Prophet

1. Reported by al-Bukhari.

(peace be upon him) said, "If they [the Muslims] were to know what is in (i.e. the value or the reward of) the 'Isha' and Fajr prayers, they would come to (perform) them even if crawling."⁽¹⁾

Many trustworthy people neglect the *Fajr* prayer in congregation at the mosque. So how can they long to perform voluntary night prayers or any other supererogatory act of worship?

Even though you may be performing an obligatory prayer beside someone, there may be a huge spiritual gap between his prayer and yours; as wide apart as the East and the West. Such a gap may exist because he is submissive and meditative in his prayer while you are not. So if one tries to think and meditate upon his prayer, forces himself to glorify Allah, and concentrates inwardly and outwardly, he will attain a reward greater than the reward he attained before being submissive in performing the prayer. Surely he has in both cases performed the obligatory prayer, but there is a great difference between the rewards of both.

b. Hastening to do acts of worship which are within the capacity of many of the trustworthy:

Some of the trustworthy can read about Malik and how he, for forty-nine years, used to perform the *Fajr* prayer with the ablution of the 'Isha' prayer.⁽²⁾ Others may read about those who performed the pilgrimage fifty times or more ⁽³⁾ and about the righteous who used to spend their nights in prayer and remembrance of Allah. They can also read about the Imams who finished reading the Qur'an more than sixty times during the month of Ramadan and who finished it thousands of

1. Reported by al-Bukhari.

2. Al-Qadi 'Ayyad, *Tartib Al-Madarik*, vol. 3, p. 250.

3. Muhammad Al-Shareef, *Nuzhat Al-Fudala'*, vol. 1, p. 329.

times during their lifetimes.⁽¹⁾ If they read about such examples, which are numerous and irrefutable, they will be saddened with themselves. Their regret is, no doubt, a good sign. But if such regret reached the state of depression, it would lead the person to neglect other great acts of worship within their reach which are similar to those mentioned previously.

I shall mention some of these acts of worship in the hope that they will help those who are interested.

1. Voluntary fasting:

In the past fasting was one of the most difficult acts of worship. When you look at the practice today, you will find it very easy, for heating in winter and air conditioning in summer have made it easy. So why does one not seize the opportunity to perform this honorable act about which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"By Him in Whose hands is my soul, the change of smell in the mouth of the fasting person smells better in the sight of Allah than the smell of musk. (Almighty Allah says in (a hadith qudsi) He leaves his food, his drink, and his lust for My Sake. Fasting is for Me and I reward it."⁽²⁾

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said,

"Any servant who fasts a day for the Sake of Allah, the Almighty, Allah keeps his face away from Hell-fire for seventy years because of this day."⁽³⁾

1. *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 176.

2. Reported by al-Bukhari.

3. Reported by Muslim.

Abu ad-Darda' (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "We were with the Messenger of Allah on a journey during a hot day and no one was fasting except the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and `Abdullah ibn Rawahah."⁽¹⁾

Lady `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) also used to fast for the whole year (except the days on which fasting is prohibited).⁽²⁾

The Prophet (peace be upon him) advised Abu Umamah to fast, telling him that fasting "has no like". And so Abu Umamah, his wife, and his servant were only ever known to be fasting.⁽³⁾

If this is the case, then why does man not maintain fasting or try to maintain it as much as he can, especially since work makes many people take their breakfast and lunch outside their houses and return home shortly before sunset. Then why do they not pursue fasting?

There are also many high school and university students who are not yet married and have no social or financial obligations. Why do they not perform fasting?

Fasting is not hard on most of the people of this era, but they overlook it. They do so even though it is equal to or even better than the performance of voluntary night prayers and other supererogatory acts of worship over the missing of which many lament. However, Allah knows best.

2. Remembrance of Allah:

This is an easy act of worship and at the same time one of the greatest, in spite of it being overlooked by many of the

1. Muhammad Al-Shareef, *Nuzhat Al-Fudala'*, vol. 1, p. 41.

2. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 132.

3. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 281.

trustworthy. In addition, some of them accuse those who focus on it as being Sufis and propagators of Bid`ah.

Such accusations, criticizing those who remember Allah much, are wrong because the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to remember Allah at all times. Almighty Allah says, ﴿Men who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides.﴾ (Al `Imran: 191)

Man is able to be in all these three conditions. Abu Muslim al-Khawalani⁽¹⁾ used to raise his voice with *Takbir* even with the boys and he used to say, "Remember Allah and mention Him even if the ignorant think that you are crazy."⁽²⁾

The reward of the remembrance of Allah is great. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"Two (groups of) words are light on the tongue but heavy on the balance and are loved by the All-Merciful: Glory be to Allah and praise be to Him, Glory be to Allah the Greatest."⁽³⁾

Once he (peace be upon him) said, *"Those who take it alone precede."* It was said, "Who are those who take it alone, O Messenger of Allah?" He answered, *"Those men and women who remember Allah much."*⁽⁴⁾

He (peace be upon him) also said,

"The one who says, 'There is no god but Allah, Alone, with no associate; sovereignty and praise be to Him and He is the

1. `Abdullah ibn Thuwab al-Khulani was a great *Tabi'i* and ascetic. He died in Dariyya in Syria in 62 A.H. See *Siyar A`lam An-Nubala'*.
2. Muhammad Al-Shareef, *Nuzhat Al-Fudala'*, vol. 1, p. 319.
3. Reported by Muslim.
4. Reported by Muslim.

Omnipotent' every day a hundred times, it will be as if he has liberated ten slaves, it will be written for him as a hundred good deeds, a hundred of his evil deeds will be erased, it will be a (means of) protection for him from the devil on this day until it becomes evening, and no one will come with anything better than that which he will come with except a man who has done more than him."⁽¹⁾

Thus, the remembrance of Allah is an easy act of worship that has a great reward. Man needs only to get used to it, and employ his tongue and his lips in performing it until it becomes a habit. He will thus win a great reward.

Dawud ibn Abi Hind⁽²⁾ used to talk with the youths telling them, "I shall say some words to you in the hope that some of you may benefit from them. When I was a boy I used to go to the market, and on my journey back home, I would oblige myself to remember Allah till I reached the place of so-and-so. Then, if I reached that place, I would oblige myself to remember Allah till I reached home."⁽³⁾

While a man was trimming the moustache of Ma`ruf al-Karkhi⁽⁴⁾, he was busy mentioning the name of Allah constantly. So the man said, "How can I trim?" He said, "You do your job and I do mine."⁽⁵⁾

1. Reported by al-Bukhari.

2. Abu Muhammad al-Khurasani al-Basri was a trustworthy Imam and Hafizh. He was a Mawla of the Banu Qushayr and died in 139 A.H. See *Siyar A`lam An-Nubala`*.

3. Muhammad Al-Shareef, *Nuzhat Al-Fudala`*, vol. 1, p. 547.

4. Abu Mahfuz al-Baghdadi was a great and blessed ascetic. He died in 200 A.H. See *Siyar A`lam an-Nubala`*.

5. Muhammad Al-Shareef, *Nuzhat Al-Fudala`*, vol. 2, p. 714.

And a cupper said to one of the righteous predecessors, "Let your lips stop" and he said, "I will stop only when time stops."⁽¹⁾

So if man maintains constant remembrance of Allah, which is easy but needs getting used to, then he will attain a great reward, his inner belief will progress, and his soul will rise to the highest levels. Allah knows best.

3. Giving charity:

It is an easy act of worship and even if man donates a little, Allah will accept it from him, provided that it is earned through lawful means. Allah will also increase it for him.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"The one who donates (even) something equal to a date from lawful gains, and Allah only accepts the lawful: Allah will take it with His Right Hand and will raise it for him - the way any of you raises his colt - until it becomes like the mountain."⁽²⁾

If this is the case of the one who offers a date or what is equal to it, what will be the reward of the one who donates a lot in charity or the one who sacrifices a lot of money? He will, no doubt, receive a great reward that may excel the rewards of those who perform voluntary night prayers. The righteous predecessors used to spend their money or most of it for the sake of Allah, so how can we refrain from doing so?

Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him and with his father) distributed thirty thousand (dinars) in one assembly, although he

1. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 1283.

2. Reported by al-Bukhari.

might later spend a whole month without eating even a small piece of meat.⁽¹⁾

Mu`awiyah (may Allah be pleased with him) sent him a thousand (dinars) but it was consumed in one year (for he gave it in charity).⁽²⁾

There is also Abu Hafs an-Naysaburi⁽³⁾ who sent ten thousand dinars to release some captives, and by the evening, he found nothing to eat for dinner.

These are some of the feasible means that are available to every trustworthy person, but, unfortunately, they may be overlooked. There are other means that I do not mention for the sake of brevity. These means are as easy as the others. For example, contemplating the Ever-Glorious Qur'an and reciting it with great sensitivity and deep reflection; contemplating the creation and the blessings of Allah; and being determined to work in areas where there is a shortage in industry, agriculture, technology, etc., and fields where there is a shortage of Muslim specialists.

2. Cultural inefficiency

Most of the trustworthy complain about not being well-read and less cultured. What is amazing is that you find them complaining about this for years without trying to do anything about it. On the contrary, however, the righteous predecessors used to hasten to overcome any trace of apathy or inefficiency they found in

1. Muhammad Al-Shareef, *Nuzhat Al-Fudala'*, vol. 1, p. 257.

2. *Ibid.*

3. `Amr ibn Salm an-Nisaburi was a godly ascetic Imam and great Sheikh in Khurasan. He died in 264 A.H. See *Siyar A`lam An-Nubala'*.

themselves. For example, Khalaf ibn Hisham al-Bazzar⁽¹⁾ found a grammatical issue difficult to learn. He thus spent eighty-thousand dirhams to learn it until he mastered it.⁽²⁾

What a gap there is between someone like him and the people of today! We find it difficult to learn many things, not only in grammar but also in religion itself, yet we do not do anything about it. We find many of the trustworthy who, unfortunately, cannot recite the Qur'an properly, and others who neither understand the principles of religion nor exert any effort to learn about it. There are others who cannot distinguish between individual duties and collective ones. They take out of the Islamic and human culture only what is required for them in order to establish themselves in the field of *Da'wah* and make them excel in their speeches and dialogues. Instead of hurrying to fill this gap, they are at a standstill; deficient, and wavering for years so as not to spoil their peace of mind. Whereas, if they felt any deficiency in their worldly life, they would hasten to mend it in any possible way.

Here are some of the practical methods for curing cultural apathy and inefficiency:

1. Memorizing the Qur'an:

Memorizing the Qur'an enriches one's knowledge in various aspects. It is the first step in the process of cultural development. It is the wish of all trustworthy people that is obstructed by many obstacles most of which are illusive, or obstacles that can be overcome through proper planning. An example of this is planning to constantly memorize a page or half a page everyday until one

1. Khalaf ibn Hisham ibn Tha'lab was a great pious Imam, Hafizh, and Sheikh of Islam. He was born in 150 A.H. and died in 229 A.H. May Allah have mercy on him! See *Siyar A'lam An-Nubala'*.

2. Muhammad Al-Shareef, *Nuzhat Al-Fudala'*, vol. 2, p. 783.

memorizes the whole Qur'an. One must never stop even if it is only for one day.

One of the trustworthy people asked for my help in memorizing the Qur'an. I advised him to memorize a page everyday without cessation. After almost four months, he came to me and told me that he had memorized almost eight parts. I encouraged him and advised him to go on but he wanted to stop because of an accident. I advised him not to do so since it would not be difficult to overcome the problem but he did not listen. Eight years later I met him and he told me that he had not finished memorizing the Qur'an yet and the reason for this was this cessation.

2. Memorizing a number of hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him):

Once the trustworthy person commences his work in *Da`wah* and mixes with people, he will have to teach them and guide them to the principles of Islam. He will not find a better source to help him, than the memorization of the Qur'an and the hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that are a rich source of knowledge for objectives and well-balanced discussions.

The way to memorize the hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is the same way I mentioned previously in memorizing the Qur'an, i.e. appointing a certain quantity to be memorized daily that should never be neglected for any reason. This will prove to be very beneficial, even if it does not bear instant fruits. One will have to choose a number of authentic hadiths that suit his circumstances, so that he may not exaggerate on one side at the cost of another.

3. Committing oneself to reading:

Reading is the worldly paradise of the trustworthy, for it is through reading that they can know their religious and worldly affairs. I need not mention here the merits of reading or its ways, for this is the subject of other specialized books. However, I shall draw attention to the practical means of overcoming inefficiency in reading.

- a. Reading a book over a fixed period of time: For example, one may commit himself to reading a small book every month, a large book every season, and a larger book like *Al-Bidayah Wa An-Nihayah* every year, or a book on the interpretation of the Qur'an or *Sahih al-Bukhari*, etc. Anyone who does this will find that by the end of every year he has read a great deal.

A trustworthy person should not claim that these are unrealistic goals, because what I mentioned can be easily applied. Everyone should make use of the minutes he spends waiting for his family at mealtimes or when he takes them to school. He may also read at the time when he stays in the mosque after *Fajr* prayer until it is time to go to work, or before going to bed. If he reads when waiting in the doctor's clinic, he will be able to read many books in a year. He should ask those who have done so.

- b. Reading a magazine in every subject that is needed: For example, one may read *Al-Mujtama`* magazine to learn about the conditions of Muslims, and *Al-Adab Al-Islami* magazine to learn about Islamic literature and how it is a means to defend Islam and its people against modernism and its destructive teachings. One may also read *Al-Majma` al-Fiqhi* magazine to

know what is new in the rulings of Islamic *Fiqh* and jurisprudential personal reasoning, etc.

Magazines are rich sources that make one acquainted with various necessary cultural aspects. So the trustworthy person must not stop reading them even if by just skimming through them to grasp the overall idea.

4. Radio and television broadcasts:

It is beneficial to utilize radio and television broadcasts by choosing some of the programs that help in the advancement and the variation of one's knowledge. However, this should be done within certain limits and one must be cautious against its corruptive effects.

5. Listening to tapes:

Listening to useful recordings while doing something else is a good way of hastening to pious deeds, for example when driving. One can benefit from these moments if one listens to lectures of scholars and intellectuals, for it is out of Allah's Grace that He facilitates for us (of knowledge) what the righteous predecessors used to travel for. So if one plans to listen to such recordings in his car, this, Allah willing, will be of great benefit to him.

3. Inefficiency in *Da`wah* (activity)

The trustworthy person is someone who is fit to spread his knowledge, goodness, and righteousness among people. Refraining from such a duty is a sign of true inefficiency. However, if this person wants to overcome this inefficiency, he should read about the Muslims who are in dire need of his support and *Da`wah*. He should also read

about the disbelievers who are fighting his religion and declaring their enmity towards it. Let this person read about the disbelievers' constant efforts aimed at destroying Islam, which is the only true religion in the whole world. He should read about all these things in the hope that he is stimulated to work and overcome his inefficiency.

Here are some practical methods for curing apathy and inefficiency in *Da`wah*:

a. Understanding that *Da`wah* is a duty:

The trustworthy person should understand that *Da`wah* is a duty and not a supererogatory act that could be adopted or relinquished according to one's own desires. It is his duty and the duty of his trustworthy fellows (men and women) to report what was revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) from Almighty Allah in the same way that he (peace be upon him) reported it, and to warn people in the same way he (peace be upon him) did. That is why Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said that *Da`wah* to Allah occupies the most eminent position in Allah's estimation.⁽¹⁾

b. Learning about the history of the inefficient:

Learning about the history of those who neglected the duty of *Da`wah* and who consequently remained unknown throughout history, helps cure incompetence in *Da`wah*. By knowing the downfall of others in this field, the dull conscience and torpid mind will wake up.

1. Jasim Al-Yasin, *Al-Futur*, p. 37.

c. Reviving the spirit of earnestness in the soul:

Earnestness is "a state of continuous and constant wakefulness that paves the way for the utilization of the energies of the *Da'iyahs* leading them to fulfill needs and invest opportunities without wasting them. This constant earnestness is controlled by what ar-Rafi'i⁽¹⁾ mentioned: "The spirit of persistent work lies in what is somehow difficult, but does not reach the extent of difficulty or discomfort, and lies in what is somehow easy, but does not reach the extent of indolence and inefficiency."⁽²⁾

Imam al-Banna (may Allah have mercy on him) said, when describing earnestness, "I can imagine the *mujahid* as someone who has prepared his equipment and got ready. He is someone who is wholly preoccupied with his role. He is always thoughtful, considerate, and ready to work if he is called upon. His coming and going, his talk, his seriousness and play never surpass the limits of the field for which he has prepared himself."⁽³⁾

At the same time, he described the person contrary to the earnest *mujahid* saying, "He is someone who sleeps deeply, eats greedily, and laughs heartily. He spends his time in fun and entertainment, and so it is impossible that he will be one of the winners or that he will be counted among the *mujahids*".⁽⁴⁾

It is obvious that al-Banna's description of the earnest person is rare and is one that can only be applied to a few people of the

1. Mustafa Sadiq ibn `Abd ar-Razzaq ar-Rafi'i was a scholar in literature, one of the greatest authors, and a poet. Although originally from Tripoli of Syria, he was born in Egypt in 1298 A.H. His poetry is dry but his prose is the best of its kind. He became deaf and died in Tanta 1356 A.H. See *Al-A'lam*.

2. Jasim Al-Yasin, *Al-Futur*, p. 40.

3. *Ibid*.

4. *Ibid*.

Muslim *Ummah*. May Allah count us among them! So al-Banna's words represent the model that we must try hard to conform to with the help from Allah.

Imam al-Mawdudi (may Allah have mercy on him) addressed the Muslim *Ummah*, encouraging them to be earnest as he said, "The enthusiasm of the heart and its attachment to the (set) target are from the necessities of *jihad*. There should be a burning fire in your hearts that is equal, at least, to the fire that burns in the heart when you find your child sick and you are unable to relax until you have taken him to the doctor, or when you have nothing in your house on which to feed your children and so you get worried, and feel forced to work and earn your living.

There should be true sentiment occupying your hearts at all times. This kind of sentiment will fill your hearts with tranquility and your minds with devotion and sincerity. It will steer your efforts and your thoughts in a way that will make your personal affairs less important. If any personal problem occurs, you will deal with it only when obliged and forced. You must try hard not to spend too much time and effort in your personal life, so that you can focus on the target that you have set for yourselves. And if this sentiment is not firmly fixed in your body, mind, and soul, then your mere words will mean nothing ... "(1)

These words are so lofty that if one's inefficiency is not healed by them, then how and when will it ever be?

4. Psychological inefficiency

By this I mean the abovementioned characteristics that lead man to inefficiency, like for example despair, indolence, gloominess, and

1. Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi, *Tadhkirat Du'at Al-Islam*, pp. 40-41.

harmful seclusion, etc. They all require constant treatment to achieve recovery. Overcoming it is very difficult except for the one to whom Allah facilitates the way, because this kind of malady becomes deep-rooted in the soul.

I advise the one who suffers from such an affliction to pray to Almighty Allah to cure him. He must then make an accurate plan for himself, or he can do this with the help of those who are skilful in psychology so as to overcome this hindrance.

Here are some words that may help in overcoming this kind of inefficiency:

"In order to be efficient, man must feel that he possesses something that he can offer others and he must feel that others need him. This feeling will cause him to be efficient and active. This may be even clearer if we look at the opposite case. If man does not have anything to offer others or at least to make him recognize his contribution to them, he will be afflicted with introversion and indolence.

This can be observed in the smallest and easiest tasks, and it can also be observed in the man who excels in something that is needed by others. It makes him realize his own value, and makes him efficient in clarifying and applying whatever he is doing. If man is confident of the importance of his effort in shaping the events of history, and realizes that he possesses the panacea for people's problems, he will attempt to achieve a lot. This is because the one who does not realize that his ideas and righteous deeds can release people from oppression and darkness can never be an advocate of justice. Realizing the effect of man's effort is what leads to a high degree of efficiency that can prevail among the Muslim *Ummah*; young and old, men and women.

These concepts are like rain in spring as it helps in stirring the growth of plants and buds in every place."⁽¹⁾

Finally, I shall conclude with two points. They are from the factors that help in overcoming psychological apathy and inefficiency:

First, knowing that psychological inefficiency is a handicap that one must get rid of. It is not always inherent, and a proof of this is that the Prophets, Messengers, and reformers were free of it.

Second, acquiring courage in practicing social intercourse and participating in what one dislikes until one becomes familiar with it. This may be achieved by getting used to advocating pious acts and forbidding evil acts, and frequently attending gatherings and talking with people. Nevertheless, this must take place gradually so that one does not feel frustrated. If one pays attention to these two points, he will achieve salvation, if Almighty Allah wills.

1. Gawdat Sa'id, *Al-Insan Hina Yakunu Kalla Wa Hina Yakunu 'Adla*, pp. 35-38.

Conclusion

I think this treatise will have an effect on the hearts of some of the trustworthy people and will encourage them to overcome their inefficiency, if Almighty Allah wills. I write this research under a flow of enthusiasm because I think that the trustworthy are capable of changing the face of contemporary history, only if they overcome their apathy and inefficiency. If they exert themselves and offer sacrifices, they will be counted among the blessed pioneers through whom the Almighty puts His Judgment into effect, and through whom He makes His religion achieve the victory He has promised:

﴿We will, without doubt, help Our messengers and those who believe, (both) in this world's life and on the Day when the Witnesses will stand forth.﴾

(Ghafir: 51)

﴿And those who strive in Our (Cause),-We will certainly guide them to Our Paths: for verily Allah is with those who do right.﴾

(Al-`Ankabut: 69)

﴿And say: 'Work (righteousness): soon will Allah observe your work, and His Messenger, and the Believers'﴾

(At-Tawbah: 105)

"O Allah! Guide us to fully trust You, seek success only by depending on You, and answer Your call out of true submission. O Allah! Protect us from the greediness of the poor, the doubt of the

hypocrite, and from the rashness of the reckless, the indifference of the indolent, the trickery of the oppressor, the carelessness of the inefficient, the anxiety of the (one) afraid, and the tranquility of the conceited!

O Allah! Make me trust only in You, wish only for Your help, surrender and commit only to You, depend on and ask only You, be pleased only with You, show humility only through showing obedience to You, and wait only for Your Provision!

O Allah! Make faithfulness always coupled with my belief; make me constantly grateful to You; and make contemplation about Your Kingdom a habit of me. Make my sole objective following Your Way, my safety in being afraid of You, and my joy and delight in remembering You!

O Allah! Grant me the secrets of Your Graciousness, the keys to Your Guidance, Your ever-desirable reward, the outcome of Your Beneficence, the honor of those who are given precedence among Your angels, the rank of those who are selected among Your Messengers, the position of those You have chosen as Friends among Your creatures, and the abode of those who are righteous among Your servants!

O Allah! Make me content with Your Provision and satisfied with Your Judgment! Make me incorruptible so that I may not approach anything You have forbidden, and pious so that I may not fall into doubts concerning You or any of Your Ordinances! Help me consider Your sources of law, and make me attentive to that which You have made clear to us and admit that which You have concealed from us! Make me carry out Your Commands, and avoid Your Prohibitions!"⁽¹⁾

Amen!

1. These supplications were said by Abu Hayyan at-Tawhidi. See *Al-Basa'ir Wa Adh-Dhakha'ir*.

Focusing invariably on trivial issues and ignoring important ones has led to apathy and ineptitude among most of us. Each one of us has been endowed with a particular talent, but by allowing ourselves to slide into indifference and channeling our energies in the wrong way, we have compromised the skills of productivity and achievement.

The author reminds us of those who achieved success by setting their priorities right and provides guidelines on how we can attain success by implementing our skills properly, thereby turning inertia into vitality and enthusiasm.

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